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The History of Oliver and Arthur.

The History of Oliver and Arthur.



Written in French in 1511, translated into
German by Wilhelm Liely in 1521, and now
done into English by William Leighton and
Eliza Barrett. 1903.

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❧ Preface ❧



Three hundred and eighty-two years ago, that is, in 1521, there was printed at Basel a volume containing the translations by Wilhelm Liely of Bern of two romances which he rendered out of French into the German language. This book was handsomely printed and embellished with numerous wood cuts generally very well executed in the manner of the time. The stories are 'Oliver and Arthur' and 'Valentine and Orsen'; the latter a very well known tale which has often been printed in English form; but 'Oliver and Arthur' has not been made familiar to us by being so put before us in English dress. It is, however, in its story quite entertaining, although it has of course few of the characteristics of modern romance; and that it enjoyed some popularity in its olden day is shown by the fact that another edition was printed at Frankfurt in 1568, a handy little book for reading, much smaller than the original ponderous volume, but also embellished with many wood cuts, which are, however, different in designs from those in the edition of 1521. ¶ To a reader in our day this story has a peculiar charm in its delightful contrast with our twentieth century novel; but besides this interest, it claims attention as a variant of the story translated from old French romance by William Morris, and printed by him at his Kelmscott Press under the name of 'The Friendship of Amis and Amile.' Not that this is the same tale; on the contrary, the names, characters, scenes, and incidents generally, are absolutely different; but it contains certain points of resemblance: first, the likeness in person and exceeding friendship of its two principal personages; second, the sacrifice

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by one of these of his two infant children for the cure of his friend, and the miraculous restoration to health of the slain babes; third, the personation of her husband by one friend to the wife of the other. The second and third points represent such remarkable incidents as to make it quite certain that these had a common source. Whether the story which Liely translated out of French into German was an earlier or later work than the tale containing the same incidents Englished by William Morris in his 'Friendship of Amis and Amile' is not known to the present translators; but Liely's story is much longer, more elaborated and filled with local coloring, than that translated by the skilful pen of the famous English poet. We have been unable to learn of any other editions than the two before mentioned; and of these very few examples now exist, the book having probably been so much read as to have used up all the copies; for we have found no others for sale than the little volume which we chanced upon in the 'Antiquity Shop' in Lucerne of Mr. J. Bossard; but there are two copies in the great National Library at Munich, very kindly loaned to us for comparison; one the counterpart of our little Frankfurt edition, and the other a quarto edition printed at Basel in 1521. If this English translation requires an apology for faults that have come from lack of experience in such work, let it be found in the statement that it was undertaken in order to fill up the vacant hours of a winter season at Lucerne, when many rainy, foggy, and inclement days prevented out-of-door occupations and amusements, and when the writing out of German into English of this little book filled very agreeably the hours that would otherwise have been tedious and heavy. In the introduction to 'Old French Romances,' a republication of William Morris's translations, it is stated that 'Dr. Hoffman,

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who has edited the earliest French verse account of the Legend, enumerates nearly thirty other versions of it in almost all the tongues of Western and Northern Europe, not to mention various versions which have crept into different collections of the *Libes of the Saints*. This at least probes the interest and popularity of the incidents which occur in all these forms. 'Oli-ber and Arthur' has also charms for the modern reader in the quaint and simple phraseology with which the tale is told, — a quaintness which may be due either to the French narrator or to the Bernese translator. It is delightful, too, to find here the total disregard of history which the tale exhibits, and to feel that the story is not subject to any limitations whatever; to journey with the characters into lands which, though bearing the names of England, Ireland, Castile, &c., are not the England, Ireland, or Castile that we know of, but fable-lands where such a story as this is possible. We are not shocked or even surprised at finding lions and dragons in Ireland; but such is the necromancy of an antique time cast over us by this olden story-teller that we accept most cheerfully the lions and the dragons with the other marvels of the book.

E. B. & W. L.

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He great master of Nature, Aristotle, says in the beginning of his *Metaphysics*, that there is implanted in the nature of all men a desire to know. ¶ Here in Bern has come to me, Liely von Bern, a strange history in the French language, written, it is stated, in the year 1511 after the birth of our dear Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. ¶ A servant at this time of my gracious master of Bern in his merchant house, where others helped and none hindered me, I have devoted my attention to this history, and have ventured with the help of God to translate it from its foreign tongue into our German, in the hope that it may bring to many into whose hands it may come the entertainment of refreshing knowledge. ¶ Although I am not so well instructed in the French language as one should be who would translate such a work as I have undertaken, still I have devoted to it all possible diligence, which must excuse me, I hope, with any reasonable person, who may think that I have been too brief, not sufficiently clear, or otherwise unsatisfactory in my translation. ¶ Although I have been careful that the substance and true meaning of the history should not be lost or in any way changed, still I have not always placed the matter according to the order in the French book; but have arranged chapters and matter in what seemed to me the most sensible way. ¶ Although I believe, for many reasons that would require too much time in relation, that this history contains a great deal of truth, yet I cannot deny that something of fiction is also mingled with it; but in regard to this such writing must rest on its own merits; and thus I will answer

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any one who casts up against me the saying of St. Paul to the young Timothy, that in these later times men forsake the truth to turn their minds toward fiction and fable. ¶ It is not my opinion that those books from which we may learn virtue and Christian life should be rejected, and that we should devote ourselbes alone to history and fable ; but that we should read seriously, choosing those works which tend to the soul's salvation and the aboiding of evil communications ; and that we may find relief from dulness and melancholy we may from time to time surrender our minds to such strange histories as this. ¶ So may God be gracious and merciful to us all.
Amen.



Oliver and Arthur

Chapter i. Of the King of Castile, the birth of his son, Oliver, the death of his Queen, and his marriage to the Queen of Algarvia.



FOR the death of the Emperor Charles the Great, who ruled over France, and conquered the people of Spain, winning them to Christianity, there was a most pious king in the kingdom of Castile, who led so goodly a life that he was beloved by all his princes and nobles. This king had no heir to his throne, a blessing he strongly desired; his princes and nobles partook of his wish and prayed daily to God, the Almighty, that he would grant them a ruler, born of this pious king, who should succeed to the throne after his father's death. The king had a very debout and beautiful wife, daughter of the king of Galicia. She, also, prayed to God that she might become fruitful, and that her son might rule over the kingdom when her husband and she

had passed from this life. God, the Almighty, listened to their prayers, and granted them an heir; and, when her time came, the queen bore a beautiful son, whereat the king and all his people were delighted, and praised God. But sorrow soon followed this joy; for the queen had a confinement so grievous that she lived not more than two hours thereafter; wherefore the king was in great grief, for this king and queen loved one another very dearly. All the nobles and the people, when they heard of the queen's death, shared in the grief of their king. After much weeping and mourning the queen was borne to her burial by all the knight-hood of the realm; and the child was baptized, and named Oliver, and was so noble in appearance that the king and his household were consoled when they looked on him. But the king wandered about the palace, and was very sad; for

there was no one to give him any comfort but his young son, whom, at times,



he took in his arms, and kissed, and said : “ O my son, thy birth, which was a great joy to me, has also caused me great grief for her whom thou and I have lost ! Still, I pray to Almighty God, that he will be gracious to her soul, and take it to himself in his kingdom ; and that he will give thee grace that I may live to enjoy much honor through thee ; and may educate thee in his service.” And he mourned continually for his beloved wife. The nobles, observing the great lamentation made by the king, and that he had no joy, meditated how they could bring him out of his misery, and bethought themselves that he was still a young man, and might yet come to have other loving ties to life if he took a noble wife, who would comfort him. This advice was not spoken behind his back, but his friends counselled him thereto daily. And, after a while, he accepted the advice of his friends, princes, and nobles, to take a wife, if a lady could be found who pleased him, and was suitable to his high station. The king of Algarbia was newly dead, and his

widow was as beautiful a woman as you might anywhere find. This queen had, by her deceased lord and king, a young son, called Arthur, of the same age as Oliver. The king of Castile, hearing of the great beauty of the queen of Algarbia, appointed an honorable embassy to go to the kingdom of Algarbia, and ask for him the queen in marriage. When this embassy came to the city where the queen dwelt, lodgings were given them, and they were honorably received by the princes and nobles ; and soon they were sent for, to appear before the queen and her council. When they arrived at her court they did homage to the queen ; and, after this, announced that they bore a message which they would gladly make known to the queen, or to her council. This they were permitted to do. Thereupon they stood up, and related in a modest and courtly manner all that they were charged with from the king. And when they had delivered their message they returned to their lodgings, and many princes and nobles went with them, to do them honor by attendance. Now when the queen’s princes and noblemen, the highest in the kingdom, were assembled about her, she said to them : “ You have heard the proposals which the king of Castile has sent to me by an honorable embassy, who have communicated his message to you. Touching this, I desire you to hold council together, and decide what you think best should be done therein. I will do no otherwise than according to your will and pleasure ; and the counsel which you give I will follow.” And when she had spoken, she took leave of them, and

withdrew to her chamber, leaving them together, to consider what should be done. ¶ Her counsellors were of one mind, that it pleased them well that a marriage should be made between their queen and the king of Castile. Whereupon they went to the queen, and made known to her what they deemed best: how they thought that the marriage would be to her advantage and honor, and to that of the kingdom. They told her that she could not ally herself to a more powerful, or more virtuous, ruler than the king of Castile; and moreover there was this consideration: while she might bear a child who should rule in Castile, she now had a young prince, who could not, for many years, reign in Algarbia; but, should she marry the Castilian king, the two kingdoms being not far apart, her country might be guarded by her husband until her son, Prince Arthur, came of age to rule. This they deemed important; and therefore they concluded that the queen should accept the offer of the embassy. ¶ The queen answered: "I have already said to you, and I say it again, that I will conform to your will, and do as you advise: therefore, give to the king's ambassadors an answer according to your decision." She thanked the princes, and withdrew, having chosen, from among them, four or five of the highest noblemen, to give her answer to the ambassadors. ¶ Then the princes, so chosen, went to the house where the ambassadors were lodged, and announced to them that the queen consented to the marriage asked for by the king of Castile; and also that they with her were obedient and submit-

sive to him, as they thought that the marriage was fitting and suitable on both sides. Therefore the ambassadors might return home, and say to their master, that the queen, if such was his will, would come to him; but, if it comported with his dignity and his wishes, it was their opinion that it would be more honorable and seemly that he should come to Algarbia, that the marriage ceremonies might be in the queen's own country. Considering, also, how both kingdoms had so recently passed through great grief for their rulers, they held it best to have now no great splendor in the wedding, nevertheless they commended this matter to the will of the king. ¶ The ambassadors thanked the queen and her advisers most heartily, and said that they would take the gracious answer, which had been given them, to their lord and king, who would greatly rejoice thereat. Also, at the queen's request, they were again brought before her, and being most graciously received, took respectful leave of her, her ladies and maidens, and of the noblemen of her court. Early on the morrow they departed; but before they rode out of the city the queen sent to them rich and honorable presents, to repay them for their courtesy and trouble. ¶ The tale tells not of the details of their route and daily journey; but, in a brief time, they came to the kingdom in Castile and the city where the king, at that time, abode. So sooner had they come there than they went at once to the king in his palace, who had heard of their arrival and awaited them. When they had made their obeisance to the king, they proceeded to relate all

that had occurred in Algarbia, and how they had fulfilled their mission to the queen. The king was highly pleased with the answer, and declared at once that he would go to Algarbia as soon as fit preparation could be made, certainly not later than the third or the fourth week, that the marriage should be in Algarbia, from whence he would bring the queen home to Castile. ¶ So the equipments went on as speedily as possible, and, by the appointed time, the king was able to announce to the queen the arrival of himself and the wedding company of his nobles in her kingdom. Whereupon, with her princes, knights, and maidens, the queen of Algarbia rode out to meet her guest and bridegroom, and received him joyfully and with due honor. Her lords and people also met the king of Castile with all honor, and acknowledged him gladly as their lord. So they rode together into her city. ¶ At the palace the king was conducted to a chamber, that he might array himself in garments that he had brought, — garments befitting his dignity as a king, and also the happy occasion of a royal wedding. Suitable lodging and attendance were also given to the Castilian nobles who accompanied the king. ¶ Soon after the arrival of the royal party, they were all brought to a grand banquet which had been prepared, where they were most honorably and hospitably served. After the banquet they retired early to rest from the fatigue of the journey. ¶ In the morning there was a great assembling at the court, from whence the queen was brought to the church, where the marriage took place. When the service was

ended all the princes and nobles, of both countries, attended the king and queen in their return to the palace, where again there was banqueting and much nuptial rejoicing. For a full month festivities, feasting, and rejoicing were continued at the court of Algarbia, where all were greatly pleased with their king. ¶ The young prince, Arthur, was very kindly considered by his lord and father, who was greatly struck by the wonderful resemblance of the two young princes. They were of the same age, exactly equal in height and size, and so much alike in features that the nobles who accompanied the king were filled with amazement at such extraordinary likeness. ¶ When the month of festivity was ended, and the king had appointed a trusty knight to the government of Algarbia, he departed with his new queen, her son, and his Castilian nobles, and by easy journeys returned to Castile, where the queen was received with the greatest honors and much rejoicing by the nobility and people of that country. ¶ When they came to suitable age, Oliver and Arthur were placed in the care of a noble and accomplished knight, that they might be educated in all things necessary for the conduct of princes; and Arthur had no less consideration than the heir to Castile; for no difference whatever was made between them. Indeed, their remarkable resemblance, which did not diminish with their increasing age, was in itself a sufficient reason why they received like treatment; for they could not be distinguished apart. Thus brought up together like brothers, they loved each other with more than brotherly affec-

tion. If they had been, indeed, twin brothers, they could not have held each other dearer, or been more alike than they appeared at the Castilian court — alike in person, in dress, in habits, and most constantly together.

Chapter ii. How Oliver

and Arthur were educated at the Castilian court; their friendship and their first tourney; how the queen afflicted Oliver with too much affection until he was compelled to fly from Castile.



When Oliver and Arthur were of proper age and strength they were instructed and exercised in the use of weapons, in tilting and other court practices, such as were fitting for the children of kings. As they grew in intelligence and all courtly graces they continued to love one another with the same perfect affection as in their childhood; and they made a brotherly alliance and compact, in which they solemnly agreed that they would be separated by death alone. The knight who was the tutor of both princes became very fond of them, and regarded with the utmost pleasure their mutual friendship; and assuredly believed that no other so pure and true a friendship ex-

isted upon this earth. The king, queen, nobles, and all the people of the land rejoiced in it and praised God, the Almighty, for the noble characters of the princes. Let no one wonder that so great praise and admiration were given to these two youths; for they possessed very fully all amiable qualities, beauty, and intelligence; in all accomplishments that are fitting for young princes, they were thoroughly educated; and, in such diversions as are practised among princes and nobles, ladies and young maidens, such as singing, dancing, wrestling, and running. In all amusements that find favor among pious and honorable people, no one excelled, or even equalled them. Briefly be it said, they did all things well. While they were young and not of sufficient strength, they were forbidden to enter the lists of the tourneys; but when the king saw that they were vigorous enough to wear armor, he caused a tourney to be held, at which three challengers awaited, on the third day, all who desired to contest, with sword or spear, for the honor and prize of the day. These three challengers were clothed alike; all their equipments, shields, and horses being the same, except that each of the three had his own color, gray, black, or brown. When the third day came a great concourse of knights, squires, men at arms, and serving men appeared upon the tilting ground, and the challenge to the tourney was accepted by many young knights. Then there was gallant breaking of lances, and the sword-play was as skilfully and heroically done as had ever been seen in the kingdom. All the ladies and young

maidens of the court sat with the queen to watch the tourney, and every knightly and heroic act in the lists won applause and high praise from these fair spectators; and indeed no one showed himself faint-hearted; but all met the encounter with true knightly spirit. But above all others, although it was their first tourney, to Oliver and Arthur the highest praise was given. The sport lasted long; for no one would yield to another; and an end was not made until night drove the contestants from the field. They would have continued even into the night; but the queen, her ladies and maidens, who had sat there through the long day, would remain no longer: so the torches were lighted, and they returned to the palace, where a feast had been made ready. ¶ When all those who had taken part in the tourney went, each to his own lodging, there to lay aside his armor, and put on a gala dress for the grand banquet at the court. ¶ When the feasting was over there was dancing, during which conversation often turned to the events of the day; and many a whispered question was asked by gallant knight of gentle lady, of the winning of the prize of honor. ¶ The ladies and young maidens were mostly of one mind, that Oliver and Arthur were victors of the day, but they seemed also agreed that the two princes were nearly alike in deserving of honors, both having awaited the combat with all who desired to encounter them, and there was little choice between the two. All the ladies of the court, and especially the maidens, declared that, while Arthur had done exceedingly well, Oliver was, perhaps, a little more skilful in the use of spear

and sword. ¶ The prize was also accorded to him by the knights; not only by those of the kingdom of Castile, but by the nobles who were present from Algarbia; for several of these, who held office from the queen, had now come to consult with her touching certain matters awaiting her decision. ¶ The prize was brought to Oliver by two pretty maidens, whereupon he blushed, for he was still very young, and such an honor was now given him for the first time. ¶ When the prize was thus offered him, he said: ¶ "I am not worthy of it, nor have I deserved it: this is bestowed out of the kind favor of the judges." Still he could not refuse it, and receiving it from the maidens with graceful humility, he thanked and kissed them, as was the custom at the Castilian court. ¶ Now the sleeping cup, prepared with wine and spices, was offered to all, and, the dance being ended, all the guests took their leave of the palace. ¶ The diversions of the day being over, and every one having taken leave, and departed, the two young princes walked home together to their lodgings, a similar thought in the mind of each: Oliver's thought was how, on another occasion, he might show himself more skilful — the thought in Arthur's mind was no grudging one because the prize had been given to Oliver; but, from manliness and a fresh young heart, he determined that he would exercise more diligently in order that praise and honor might be given to him also. So their rivalry in arms cast no cloud over the true friendship of these faithful ones. ¶ After all the court guests had departed, the queen was able to consider more intently

thoughts which had been fluttering her heart and disturbing her mind throughout the day — thoughts not serene and helpful like those of the princes; but agitating and uncomfortable. Out of the events of the day she found herself always returning to the image of Oliver, gallant in the tourney, with the honor of victory on his brow, to his beauty of person, how well his dress became his young figure — to be sure, her son was like him; but she could think only of Oliver, his knightly deeds, how well he danced, how the ladies and young maidens smiled on him. Happy would that woman be who should win his love; well might she say: “He is the crown of all manhood, a flower of virtue, and a fragrant rose.” Her mind was full of these thoughts when she fell asleep. She saw in her dreams, not only him who had so pleased her as he danced in the hall; but an unworthy thought arose in her mind that did not leave her with her dream; but carried with her, to bring trouble that was pitiful, as the tale shall tell. ¶ In the morning, at the hour when every one at court arose, Oliver and his companion betook themselves together to the court. The queen received them both, as had been her custom always, with a smiling countenance and friendly words; she embraced Oliver, kissed him, and said to them both, ¶ “God give to you a good day.” ¶ Then she murmured to herself, in whispered words, ¶ “Oliver, when I look on thee, thou art to me the mirror of the world.” ¶ She believed these words were spoken in too low a voice to be heard by any one; but Oliver heard them, and wondered greatly. He could

not decide whether her words were uttered from a good, or from an evil desire; so he let the thought, which her words had suggested, pass by, as an unworthy thought on his part, and dwelt upon it no more; for he knew not what was in the queen’s mind, nor had he any intimation what the outcome would be. ¶ As time went on, matters remained in the same estate. Oliver and his comrade were not idle; for they daily busied themselves in the service of the ladies of the court and the young maidens, finding in their youthful hearts constant pleasure in dancing and engaging in other honorable amusements, which were the daily custom at their court; and they did not weary of this, for they did not neglect their knightly practice with lance and sword, tilting in the tilt-yard, with other manly exercises comely in the lives of king’s sons. ¶ Whenever there was a festival, with tourney and tilting, in any part of the kingdom, whether near or far, thither the two companions were always ready to ride together to try their fortunes in the lists. ¶ The princes of the land and men of lower degree rejoiced when they saw their young lord, with his comrade, come among them; and they said among themselves, that it was an honor and a pleasure to the king of Castile when honor was won by them; for the king might well rejoice that he had lived to see his only son so endowed with all noble qualities. ¶ But happiness is often turned to grief in the vicissitudes of this world, and such befell the worthy king of Castile. In a little time all his joy was taken from him, and converted into grief and bitterness by the queen,

his wife. ¶ The more the queen dwelt upon the amiable qualities that belonged by nature to Oliver's beautiful youth, the more did her passion for him wax. Often when alone, she said to herself, ¶ "O my dear Oliver, thou noble creature, thou treasure of my thoughts, I may well curse thy beautiful youth because it is the cause that I am led to forsake the love of my noble lord through desire of thee! — but if thou dost not take compassion upon me then will the remaining days of my life be full of heart-breaking despair." ¶ In such wise the queen lamented, and this continued so long that her health suffered; and, upon a time, when Oliver and her son came to her to inquire concerning her health, she received them both well, but gave to Oliver more shew of affection than to her own son; and Arthur remarked this. Then she said to him, ¶ "Dear son, I do this out of courtesy to my husband; as the king does to me, showing affection to thee, so I do to him, showing much love for his son." ¶ She took Oliver by the hand, and made him sit by her while Arthur strayed through the hall, little thinking that his mother would act toward his dearest comrade in any unseemly fashion. And the queen spoke with Oliver, saying, "Tell me, dear son, hast thou no sweetheart, no one with whom thou art in love?" ¶ "No," he answered; but she said, ¶ "I cannot believe what you now tell me; I beg you not to conceal from me the real truth. In what place is she who is so blest that thou lovest her, and art thou obedient to her at all times?" ¶ "Gracious madam and mother," answered Oliver, "by my faith,

she is in no place, and there is no such one. There are in this land so many fair ladies and young maidens that I know not which of them I most admire; I should also fear to be treated with disdain should I shew a preference. I think that you are disposed to make sport of me when you say that she whom I love must feel herself blest thereby. Gracious madam, let me say that I have not yet so proven myself that I may dare ask any lady to give me her love; so, I have always offered my service alike to all those who required, or desired it, or in whose presence I have found myself; and I am satisfied to have it so." ¶ As he spoke the queen found that his answer did but make him appear more amiable in her eyes; and she was so much moved by her inclination toward him, that he perceived some part of what was in her mind, and ceased to speak to her. When the queen saw that he remained silent, she said to him, ¶ "Ah, my son, tell me, if now a powerful princess were to ask for thy love, wouldst thou answer her with denial?" ¶ "I am not able to believe" — he replied — "that any lady would desire this, or be so foolish as to make such request; and therefore there can be no answer." ¶ Then, as he wished to remain no longer in such conversation, he made a sign to Arthur, to call him, that he might have a pretext for leaving the queen. Arthur promptly replied to his comrade's signal by saying, ¶ "Come, my brother; we must go: it is the time when we should be at the place of which thou knowest; and I remind thee because I think thou hast forgotten it." ¶ Oliver answered

hastily and in confusion; for the queen's conversation had bewildered his mind, "It is true; and I thank thee." ¶ Then



he took leave of his royal stepmother with a few formal words; but she took his hand, held it long, and pressed it, and seemed loth to let him go. ¶ At all this Oliver was sorely troubled, suspecting most surely her guilty purpose; but he dared not speak of it to his brother and comrade, who was a dutiful son, through fear that he would be very angry, and think ill of him for such suspicion, though he felt himself not at all to be blamed in the matter. ¶ After they had left the hall the queen went into a little chamber alone, threw herself upon a couch, and murmured, ¶ "My best beloved, thou art not so unobserving that thou hast not discerned the distress which I suffer; and truly it cannot, it shall not, so continue; for to-morrow thou shalt learn all my will." ¶ Oliver, too, was in as troubled mind as was the queen. On reaching his lodgings he went alone to his chamber, and prayed: ¶ "My heavenly Father, Thou hast created me in Thy image; and Thou hast given me more beauty—a great misfortune if it is to lead to such trouble

as seems to be upon me—than it is for my honor to have; for this same beauty of body will be the cause of my destruction if Thou, my God, dost not inter-bene, in thy great clemency and goodness. I entreat Thee to protect the honor of my father and mine own, that through me no cause be given to the queen, my father's wife, to do that which would be against the honor of us all. To such dishonor I will not consent, even if, in consequence of such refusal, I should suffer death. Therefore I beg of Thee, my God and Creator, that Thou wilt convert her from this accursed desire, and wilt lead her to better life and purpose, that she may become a good and virtuous queen to my dear father." ¶ Early on the following morning Oliver arose, and went to the court, as was his custom for the morning meal. He could not do otherwise without exciting much remark. When he came to the court he went, as was his wont, to the queen, and wished her good-day: he did this in order that no one should observe any change in his manner toward her, and so he led to suspect any evil; but, as soon as he had given her his greetings, and in order not to be alone with her, he withdrew himself among the court people. ¶ She came to him, however, at once without shame, took him by the hand, and said that she had something to say to him; so, against his will, she drew him by force with her, and made him sit by her. He seated himself, but he would not speak to her; so when he remained silent her face flushed, and she said, ¶ "My friend chosen from all the world, rememberest thou the words spoken by us yesterday?" ¶ "In

truth," replied Oliver, "I have thought so little of them that I forget whereof I spoke." "Ah, my chosen love, I think not so lightly of the memory, that thou hast so soon forgotten matters so lately spoken. If I mistake not thou understandest, better than I can say it, the wish of my heart." "Gracious madam," he said, "I know not what you mean." "In truth, my dearest one," said the enamored queen, "in order that thou mayest understand, I say to thee that I will be thine, body and heart. It is no new thing that thou hast become the ruler of my life: only fear and shame have kept me silent so long. That all misunderstanding may be ended, I say to thee now that thou mayest henceforth hold me for thy dearest on the earth, as I do thee. But if all happiness henceforth is to leave me on account of thee, and thou yieldest not to my entreaty, I will slay myself: therefore my heart is in thy hands, and my life and my death." Oliver shrank in horror from her while he answered, "Gracious madam, thou sayest that thou dost love me; for which I give thee thanks; and that thou wishest me to hold thee for my dearest on the earth; but thou knowest that my love could not be greater than it is for my gracious mother; and I know of no honorable service, be it what it might, that I will not do for thee at all times; and this is also my bounden duty. But I do not believe that thou art so foolish as to be otherwise inclined toward me, than to desire such love from thy son as is fitting to my father's honorable wife and my mother. I told thee in such respect, that my whole mind is fixed on this,

that I would sooner suffer death than do aught against the honor of my noble father, or of thee, gracious madam and mother. If it were possible that I could do otherwise, accursed would be the hour in which I was born." "The queen was very angry, and the fire of her unnatural passion flashed in her eyes, as she answered, "Accursed be thy beauty on account of which thou art proud and insolent, disdainful a noble queen, who bends to thee, and has told her love—a love that should be hidden in her heart; that should be the joy of her heart; but which, by thy pride and insolence, is now changed into bitterness. I declare thee now to be a malicious enemy and murderer of women; for thou art my murderer, the cause of my death, which will quickly follow; but be assured I will not die alone. In whatever manner I can compass thy death I will do all in my power to bring it about. If I must die, thou, who art cause of my death, shalt also die with me. O! I pray to God, the Almighty, that he will pardon the ill deeds that shall arise out of thy disdain of me—of me, an unhappy queen whom thou slayest." She had raised her voice while uttering these imprecations against the bewildered Oliver, until she excited the attention of those near by, though none heard her clearly enough to understand her words. Now in a lower voice she said, "Arise and leave me; for it is not possible for me to remain longer near thee, lest people see the suffering that weighs upon my heart." When Oliver took leave of the queen, who went straightway to her chamber, and there, where no one might hear her, gave

way to such lamentation and despair as cannot be told. Oliver sought the king, his father, hoping to gain by his presence some relief to his sad heart, some return of his accustomed serenity; but he remained only a little time with him; then he returned, with his dear friend and comrade, to his lodgings. Arthur perceived that his brother was not so joyous as was his wont, that some dark shadow seemed to be over his spirit, and asked, "What is amiss with thee; for I see that something weighs upon thy heart?" Oliver could give him no answer; so this good comrade did not disturb him with any further questions. And Oliver remained the entire day in his chamber, and gave his people to understand that he was ill, in order that he might hide the distress of mind that had come upon him. When Arthur perceived this, and that he would not go to the court, he was sorely troubled because he could not help his friend, as he would so gladly have done, and was very loth to leave him alone. After the evening meal, however, Oliver begged him to go to the court, to the king and the ladies, and remain there saying nothing to any one of his illness; and when he came back he would find him in bed, perhaps asleep. As Oliver urged this, Arthur consented to go, saying, "My brother, I leave thee since it is thy wish; but, as it may be late when I return, and I might then awake thee out of comforting and refreshing sleep, I will remain away to-night. I wish thee a good night, and would willingly stay with thee if I might; but thy will shall be a law to me; and I pray God, our master, that he give thee rest in such

measure that to-morrow thy distemper may have passed away." Then Oliver embraced him, with wet eyes, and said, "Dear brother, go while there is yet time; for the dancing has already begun." Arthur, who perceived the moisture in his brother's eyes, wondered greatly; for he knew him so well as to be certain that no slight matter could move him thus. But he took leave, concealing that he had seen the tears; and went away in great anxiety. Had he known what was in the mind of his comrade, then would his solicitude have become despair; but he departed with no foreknowledge that he would not see this dear friend again until after many severe trials and labors had been endured by them both, as the tale will tell. After his brother was gone Oliver remained in great sadness. Soon thereafter he gave orders to his chamberlain that all of his people should be sent away, as he wished the rooms to be quiet for sleep, and would have, that night, no one by him; but he requested him to first bring ink and paper. When all were gone he undressed and lay down. It is scarcely possible for heart to conceive, or tongue to tell, the misery which he suffered. He thought of the good will and respect which he enjoyed in his land, alike from the nobility and the common people, a love that was dear to him, and which he was now to lose for how long he could not tell. When he thought sadly of the great distress, of which he would be the cause, to the king, his father, and to his faithful comrade, Arthur, who had shewn for him so much friendship and brotherly love. He thought also of the pleasant companionship he had enjoyed

with rich and poor, with the ladies and young maidens of the court, of all the comrades of his youth. To leave seemed worse than death. None the less was he firm in the purpose, which he had formed, to leave pleasures and honorable station, to bid farewell to the whole kingdom, and to go into strange lands, dedicated to the service of Almighty God, remembering that happiness in this world is not to be compared to eternal happiness, and that the mortal body is but perishable flesh created to be, in this world, food for worms. ¶ He considered also that his precious soul, created by God, must abide eternally in hell if he should yield to the wicked desires of the queen, and he knew not what evil might befall if he remained near her. ¶ After pondering on all that had happened, he knew that it was better, and more for the honor of all, that he should go at once; for he could perceive no other way of escape from the difficulties of the posture in which he had been placed by the insanity — as he preferred to consider it — of the queen. However well he might act toward her, he feared the result when he remembered the words she had spoken and the passion she had shown. ¶ When he took the paper and ink, and wrote a letter to Arthur, blessing his dear comrade, with many regrets for the parting: he wrote that for reasons of importance, he must go away, and begged him, with the greatest earnestness he could express, to forgive him that he did not make these reasons known; for, in truth, it was not possible for him to take personal leave of his dear brother, or to tell him the story of his parting. Still, although his eyes could no longer behold

him, he would not separate from him in heart. In whatever land he might be, he would not the less hold him as a brother, because he was separated from him; and he would never forget, or cease to love, him. ¶ When he wrote that he wished all happiness and blessings to the king, his dear father, and also to the queen, and to all who loved him. He continued: "My dear brother, as I know not what adventures I may meet, I leave thee a little glass that is full of clear water; and I beg thee that thou wilt look at that glass daily for my sake. If I meet with disaster, the water in the glass will change, and become black, which will be a token that I am in sore trouble. Therefore, my best beloved brother and comrade, I beg thee, through the brotherly loyalty that is between thee and me, that, if it so change, thou wilt mount, and ride forth from this land of Castile; and wilt not cease from the search until thou hast learned news of me and where I am. My faithful comrade, in thee is set all the hope I have in this world. There is nothing else for me to write, dear brother; for of this thou art entirely certain, that I am wholly and always faithful to thee. I beg God, the Almighty, to bestow on thee so much of good as I, thy brother, wish to thee: and to Him I commend thee." ¶ When the letter was finished he placed it, with the glass, in his own room, where he thought it would be most quickly found, and, having dressed himself, and girded on his sword, went down out of his chamber about midnight, and entered the stables where at that hour there was no one, and he was free to carry out his purpose without

the knowledge of any. ¶ From among his horses he chose the one that he loved the best, saddled and mounted him. He took with him a pouch in which he had placed two thousand nobles, which bore upon them the stamp of his beloved father and of the kingdom of Castile; and, besides these, he had certain jewels which were less in bulk than the nobles, but of equal value. ¶ That this young prince had money and jewels, must not be wondered at; for many had given him presents, on account of the harmony and good will that he helped to preserve in the land, with kindly words and deeds; and also his father was very generous in gifts to him. ¶ He found the gates of the castle open; for the kingdom had at this time no foes among neighbors, nor in its own princes and nobles, so there was no need to make fast its castle doors. Hence Oliver did according to his will, and departed secretly upon his journey, under the light of the moon. ¶ When he had passed out of the castle and city, and had ridden for a little space, he turned his fair, young face once more toward the city, and cried, ¶ “O King of Castile, thou lovest, this night, a son! thou, noble kingdom of Castile, the heir to thy throne! and thou, my best beloved brother, thy devoted and faithful comrade!” ¶ He also murmured unheard farewells to all who had been dear to him in the past; and his last adieu to his home took some such form as this: ¶ “Ye ladies of the court and young maidens, God guard ye! and I pray God ever to protect, from every disaster, the city in which my youth has been spent, and all

who dwell therein, or in any part of my dear land!” ¶ He prayed also that God would give wisdom to the queen, and change the evil intent she held toward him. Having made these tearful adieux, he turned his horse’s head again toward his road, and brushed his mantle across his eyes, to dash away the tears. ¶ He rode forward steadily, until he came to a little village, near which was a sea-port, and whither he was come at a favorable time; for he found that a great lord had come hither, and would sail hence upon a journey; and with him was a noble foreign knight. Both of these were on board the ship, with many other men of rank; and it was their purpose to journey to the city of Constantinople. ¶ Oliver most earnestly desired of the captain of the ship, that he would take him on board, promising to pay him well; but he would not. Then the noble knight who was in the ship favored and urged Oliver’s request, until, by such and so great solicitation, he was at length received on board. To the knight who had been so much his friend Oliver gave his horse, to show his gratitude. ¶ And now they sailed out upon the sea, and Oliver was alone; who he was, was known to no one in the ship; but, through the grace of God, who brings about many wonderful things, friendly relations grew up between Oliver and the knight who had helped him, as the tale shall tell.

Chapter iii. What happened at the Castilian Court after the flight of Oliver.



When it was morning Oliver's servants came, as was their wont, to his chamber, in order to be at the service of their master when he arose; but they did not find the chamberlain there. They waited before the door until it was time to go to the court for the morning meal; then came Oliver's beloved chamberlain, and found the servants standing about the door. He inquired of them, and especially of the prince's body-servant, "Why are you not in the chamber of our master, to make him ready, and give assistance in dressing?" The body-servant answered, "I know not how it is with him; for I have not been able to come into his chamber to-day. Last night he ordered that I go out from him, and come not in again until he summoned me. I left my key in the chamber, and dare not knock upon the door lest he be angry with me." The chamberlain knocked upon the door, but no one answered him; for no one was there. As he ceased to knock, came Arthur, who had been to hear mass, and now wished to inquire how his brother had passed the night. When he learned that no one had been in the chamber, he feared,

remembering his yesterday's ill news, that some mischance had befallen his comrade; so he called for his own servant, who carried his key, for both brothers had keys alike. When the key was brought, he ordered that the door be unlocked, and went into the chamber, fastening the door when he had entered. There he found no one in the bed, or in the chamber, and was much surprised. Still seeking through the rooms, and finding no one, he was sore troubled, and knew not what to think. As he went about in the chamber, considering the matter, he saw a glass standing there, which he knew to be a favorite with his brother; and, taking it up, saw the letter in Oliver's handwriting. This he at once read; and, when he knew what was there written, all the sorrow that he had heretofore known in his life, had it all come to him together, would not have equalled one hundredth part of the pain, misery, and wrath that he endured in that hour. His heart seemed bursting within him, as he threw himself on the bed, and lamented so grievously that, had any one seen him, he must have pitied him. "Alas and woe," he cried, "my friend and brother! Truly I do not believe that thou lovest me, as I do thee; or thou wouldst have told me the cause of thy going away. I could not have left thee, as thou hast forsaken me. Ah, my brother! I know well that thou hast not gone without good cause; but in truth, I have never done thee any wrong, nor deserved this treatment in any way. If it had been thy wish, surely thou couldst have told me a part, at least, of thy trouble; for I would rather suffer death than know

that I have lost thy trust. O noble Oliver, thou wert the hope of the whole kingdom! What will thy afflicted father say? and also my mother the queen, who loved thee with her whole heart?"

¶ Here he was so overcome by grief that he fell in a swoon upon a couch in the chamber, and lay there as if dead.

¶ When the nobles, who had come from the court, and who now stood before Oliver's door, heard nothing from Arthur after he had fastened the door behind him, they sent Oliver's chamberlain to the king, to make known to him what had chanced at the prince's chamber. He ran to the court, and coming before the king, thus related his disturbing message: ¶ "Gracious king, your son was yesterday ill, and sent every one out of his rooms, remaining there alone; and this morning we have not been able to go in to him, I have knocked upon the door, but no answer was made. My gracious lord, Prince Arthur, went into the rooms, and much time passes, during which we hear nothing from him; therefore I make known to you these things, that you may act, if it be your will and pleasure, in the matter."

¶ The king answered, that he would straightway go himself, and ascertain the cause of the silence. ¶ When he arrived, and found the door still closed, he ordered that it be broken open; then went he into the rooms, with certain of his friends. ¶ Seeing that Oliver's bed was vacant, his mind, from that moment, was very ill at ease. Searching about, he saw Arthur, lying upon a little couch, looking more like a dead than a living man; for he had not yet recovered from his swoon. ¶ As soon as he

saw him the king cried, "O Arthur, thou knowest, without doubt, more of this mystery than I." ¶ When he drew nearer, perceiving that Arthur was in a swoon, he ordered that bread should be dipped in wine, and held before his nose. ¶ As Arthur came to himself, a letter fell from his hand, which the king took up and read. ¶ When he understood that Oliver, who was so dear to him, had left him, he was not able to read the rest of the letter. For, when he read that his son had ridden away, and how he blessed his father, he fell upon the floor, overcome by grief. ¶ This trouble in the chamber was most piteous; and the servants knew not whether to run first to the king, or to Arthur, or what to do: the companions of the king, too, stood bewildered and helpless. ¶ When the king again recovered speech, he cried aloud, and said, ¶ "My beloved son, thou wast the joy and stay of my life! What shall I do? O wretched king! why does not God send to thee welcome death? Truly I desire nothing so much as death; and nothing to me seems so hateful as life. Ah, my child, thou didst cause the death of thy mother at thy birth; and wilt also slay thy father, who has loved thee so dearly!—thy father who has watched thy beautiful youth bloom into all virtues and noble deeds, in which thou wast ever foremost! I have thought that thou wouldst be a staff to my age, a tower of strength to the kingdom, a support to all thy friends, and an avenging sword to my enemies, thine own, and those of the kingdom. But I see that all the hopes which I have set on thee have failed me now, are forgotten by thee, and that the remain-

ing days of my life must be worthless and full of affliction and numberless labors. But I pray God, the Almighty, to make me resigned to suffer; and that he will keep thee, my dear son, in his holy care, and give thee more of happiness, than I fear will go with thee in thy exile." Thus, for a long time, mourned the afflicted father, the queen joining in his lamentations, with many tears; and no one could comfort them. After a time a hope sprung up in the king's breast, and he said, "Dear friends, comfort, I pray you, a sorrowing father, who has lost his dear son; and cause inquiries to be made in every direction, so that news of him may, perchance, be found." Many went forth on all the roads to carry out the will of their master; and he was more cheerful in the hope that he would again be freed from his grief. To make a long story short, they rode abroad into many lands and provinces, but could learn nothing that served in any way to help them in their mission. After they had searched long in vain, they returned home to the king, and each one related to him what he had done. When the king knew that no trace was to be found of his lost son, he became sick with grief, and lay in his bed in such distress that they, who looked on him, did not deem it possible that he would again arise, to take up his life. The queen saw her husband in this extremity, and knew that she was the guilty cause of it. The passion of anger which had moved her was changed into great sorrow and distress; and she said to herself, "Thou most wretched woman! Thou art the cause of this affliction, and of the loss of the

noblest and truest son that man or woman ever had; so shouldst thou be heavily punished. Ah, my dear Oliver, thou beautiful youth! If I were drawn by wild horses, or suffered the greatest torture man could inflict, it would be no more than I deserve for the wrongs and insults heaped on thee by me, when my reason and love were not under my control; when the venomous snake of rage ruled and overcame me, so that I could not see the truth and the goodness that were in thee. Since thy loss brings so great misery, and I am the cause of it, I may nevermore be happy; but, through all time, must drag out my life in remorse and anguish. I pray God, the Almighty, that he will guard thy fair youth, dear Oliver, from all the misfortune which I have brought upon thee." It were long to relate the lamentations of princes and nobles, and of all who dwelt in the kingdom; therefore the tale will leave them, and tell what next befell Oliver.

Chapter iv. How Oliver is shipwrecked, miraculously saved, and journeys to Canterbury with a friendly knight; how his friend dies, and Oliver redeems his dead body from the penalty of a debt.



The tale has already told how Oliver left his country, and embarked

upon the sea. ¶ For two months his ship was driven by adverse winds out of its course until the sailors knew not where they were on the tempestuous waters. Then there came, in the night, a violent storm, with still increasing wind, so that it became impossible to manage the ship, which drove before the tempest. Now they could only implore of God, the Lord, that he would come to their aid, and guide the ship to land; for otherwise they had nothing to expect but the hour of death. ¶ They were in dire danger for three days, and the wind was so strong that the ship was at last driven on a rock in the sea, and split in twain, so that all on board perished, except only Oliver and the knight, to whom he had given his horse. ¶ These two saw the land not far distant, and, when the ship broke up, held it best to attempt to swim to the shore, that it might be possible so to preserve their lives longer than if they perished miserably with the destruction of their ship. ¶ Therefore each signed himself with the symbol of the cross, commended himself to God, the Almighty, dropped from the ship into the sea, and swam toward the land, in the hope to save himself; which had not been possible if God, the Lord, had not shown his mercy. ¶ When they had swum for a long time, and both were so weary that they had no other expectation than to drown, in their anxiety and distress they found themselves not far from each other. Then called they on God, the Almighty, to take pity on them, out of his compassion; for, in their own efforts, was no hope that they might reach the shore. God, the Almighty, forgot them not, and granted the prayer so

trustfully uttered. ¶ He sent to them, each, a white stag, which they suddenly saw swimming beside them, and showing so submissive that they wondered greatly what it could mean; but each drew himself up upon the back of one of these animals, and so was brought to the land. ¶ When they reached the land, the stags as suddenly were gone, as they had first appeared; and the two seemed not much better than dead; they were very weak, had swallowed much water, and were nearly frozen. All as they were, they forgot not God, the Almighty, but knelt to give him praise and thanks, with their whole hearts, for the great miracle that he had performed for them. ¶ When they had ended their prayer, they stood up; and, in great pain, walked to a house, which they could see before them, not far distant. This was the house of a nobleman of the country, who, when he saw their shipwrecked condition, pitied their distress, made them welcome, and led them into a chamber, where he, himself, made for them a good fire, by which they dried themselves, and were warmed into more comfort. He also served them with the best food he had, and dry clothing. ¶ When they were somewhat restored, he asked them how they had come there; so they related to him their shipwreck, the great distress in which they had been, and the miracle which God, the Almighty, out of his boundless mercy, had performed for them, protecting their lives in the midst of those hungry waves. ¶ The nobleman was filled with wonder, but believed them, knowing that to God, the Lord, nothing is impossible. ¶ This miracle shows us that it is well to keep

in remembrance that those who find themselves in trouble through misfortunes, — too often caused by sins in which they persist, — if they turn to the grace of God, and appeal to his mercy, need not despair; whosoever in his sore need cries out to God in faith, to him will God manifest himself, and relieve that suppliant from his danger. Witness these two who were saved out of the sea when they seemed to be in the same peril as their companions who perished miserably. God granted them mercy in answer to their prayers. Oliver asked his hospitable entertainer the name of the land in which they were fallen; and was told that it was England. At this the knight, who was with Oliver, showed much joy. Although he was now become very ill, he asked the nobleman, who was their host, if he knew of a knight called John Talbot of Canterbury; and he answered, that he had heard report of him, but had never seen him, though he abode in the city of Canterbury, which was in that province, only twenty miles distant from his house. When the sick knight cried, "Praised be God, that he has led us hither. I am the John Talbot of whom I spake, and my house is in the city of Canterbury, as you have said. I feel an inward consciousness that, unless God comes to my aid, I shall only escape from the sickness, now upon me, through my death, which, I doubt not, is near at hand. I beg you, therefore, good friends, to help me find a conveyance, in which I may be taken to my house in Canterbury, that I may set my worldly matters in order, and turn my thoughts to God, the Al-

mighty, as a good Christian should do; and if, through God's mercy, I come to my home, you shall be well rewarded." Oliver, perceiving that the knight was in truth very ill, which gave him great sorrow, said, "My gracious and very good friend, I grieve that you are so ill. You have kept with me true comradeship, and on no account will I forsake you until I see what is the outcome of your ailment. I give thanks to God that I am now so far recovered, that I can again travel. I am ready to ride with you to the city to which you wish to be carried." The knight thanked him, and said that his one wish was to travel to his home, and he prayed God that he might come there alive. A conveyance was made ready, and the two knights took leave of their kind host, who had given them shelter, food, and comforts, for which they thanked him, and would have paid him, but he would receive nothing. They went on their way, and Oliver rode by the knight's side, until they came to the city of Canterbury, where the sick man was brought into his house, at which, though sick unto death, he was exceedingly glad. Oliver was sorrowful for the good knight, over whom much lamentation was made by his relatives, although, after his death, they showed little love for him, as the tale shall tell. Now this Sir John Talbot had been, for seven years, in debt to a merchant of Canterbury, who put him under ban until the debt was paid. He had not the means to pay the merchant until he sold his property, which he now offered to do; but soon after he came into the city, he died with the debt unpaid.

The body of Sir John Talbot could have been buried in holy ground if the merchant had believed that his kin would have satisfied the debt; but this he doubted; for when he demanded payment he could not obtain it, nor any satisfactory promise, so he would not release the dead man from the ban. The body of a noble Christian knight was therefore denied a sacred resting-place, and must needs be laid in unconsecrated ground through the hardness of heart of his relatives, who held his lands and gold as more desirable than to come to the help of his poor soul. Perceiving the greed of his dead friend's kin, Oliver



was much disgusted in mind, and spoke to both parties, saying that it would show a virtuous and seemly spirit on the part of the relatives of the dead knight, and also on the part of the creditor, if they would make some friendly settlement of the matter with each other; for it would be an unworthy act of both if this good knight, who had always borne a virtuous and honorable character, were denied Christian burial. But he spake without avail, for the heirs feared there would not be sufficient property for them after the debt was paid, and would therefore

give little heed to Oliver's solicitations. When the merchant, to whom the debt was due, understood that they would not pay what their father owed, he was angry, and said that he would be paid the whole debt before he would release the body from the ban. Oliver, finding that there was no help and that the ban must remain, asked the merchant the amount of the debt. Having learned that it was a thousand crowns, though little remained of the money he had taken with him, he paid the merchant with jewels he yet had, in order that the good knight should be allowed to rest, and that his soul should not be imperilled. He thought that he could perform no better work; and so the burial was celebrated in an honorable manner, as was due to a good and noble knight. For this Oliver was greatly praised by all the community; and the relatives of the dead knight were much blamed, as was just.

Chapter v. How Oliver learns of a grand tournament to be held in London; is assailed by robbers in the forest; and meets a friendly knight, who promises to equip him for the tournament.



While Oliver tarried, for a time, in the city of Canterbury, with very little remaining after he had paid the knight's debt, he learned that the king of England, with the advice of his princes and subjects throughout the realm, had announced a grand tournament to be held for three days, to which all noblemen, who had pleasure and skill in such sports, were invited. The lists were free to all noble knights; but only to one who was unwed could the chief prize of the tourney be given, for the hand of the king's daughter was to be the reward of the victorious knight, if he were of unblemished character. ¶ The daughter of the king was famed to be the most beautiful princess in the world; and the king would not consent to give her to a foreign king; for he desired to keep her near him in his own land, as she was so dear to him, that he could not be happy if a day passed in which he did not see her. ¶ He thought, also, that it would be an advantage and honor to the country, that he should give her to a manly and worthy knight, even though he were poor in lands and gold rather than to a rich prince, who might be scantily endowed with knightly virtues. As for royal blood and riches, his daughter had enough for both; for she was the princess of England, and heiress to its throne. ¶ Therefore had he proclaimed this tournament, in order to secure, as his daughter's husband, a brave and powerful knight, in whose hands the kingdom would be safe from invasion, and its people sheltered from any who would wrong or oppress them. ¶ Four hundred knights were to hold the list against all comers;

and eleven months had passed since the tournament had been proclaimed. Announcement of it had been made to all the realms and principalities of Christendom. ¶ But Oliver heard naught of it until he came to the city of Canterbury; and now only fifteen days were to come before the lists would be opened. He was greatly troubled, for he feared that he could not prepare himself in so short a time; and, moreover, for such a tournament, he no longer had sufficient money to equip himself in such manner as seemed fitting. Still he set himself to do his best as quickly and as creditably as he might. From the hour in which he first heard of her, his thoughts turned constantly to the English princess; and he said to himself, ¶ "Ah, how happy would I be, were I now, though driven into exile by misfortune, to be so blest that a queen would be given to me in marriage — a queen whom all men praise for her virtues and her beauty." ¶ He had, therefore, a great desire to put himself in the company of other princes and nobles; so, as the time was near at hand, he settled with his landlord, paid him honorably, and rode out of the city of Canterbury on the road to London, where the tournament, with its great festival, was to be held — a festival to be celebrated with more magnificence than had been seen for many years. ¶ So many princes and nobles had already come that the hostelryes and lodgings in and about London were filled or bespoken: so Oliver had been told; but, as he rode on his way, his thoughts were not so much on the difficulties in the way of his enterprise as upon the

princess who was to be the prize of the contest; and he longed for the hour when he should see her; and, if it might be, do great deeds to win her. ¶ So riding joyfully onward, in a pleasant dream of achieving great honors in the lists beneath the eyes of fair ladies, and of one fairer than all, he entered a wood apart from the road that he should have taken. When he had ridden a short distance into the wood he met a party of fifteen ruffians, who wore armor and had good weapons, and who cried out, ¶ "Get on him! Drath to him!" ¶ When he first saw them they were so close upon him, and attacked him so sharply, that he had no choice but to fight in his own defence. He drew his sword, and struck the nearest for with such force that his head was cloven to the teeth, and he fell dead upon the earth. When he struck about him manfully on all sides with such vigor and effect that he hewed off here a head, there an arm, until the boldest of them shrank back from him, nor dared to encounter his strokes. He had so disposed himself that they could only attack him from the front and one at a time, so he was the better able to defend himself. ¶ Through the help of God, on whom he called constantly, he so exerted his strength, and struck such mighty blows, that in the end eleven of the robbers lay dead before him in the forest, and the others fled in fear. ¶ When he found himself alone of the living, there was a great and grim company of the dead around him. He dismounted, and thanked God who had preserved him from his enemies; then he fastened his horse to a branch of a tree, and set him-

self to bind up his wounds, and none of them were deep; and for this mercy he gave great thanks to God. ¶ While he was thus caring for his hurts, and giving no thought to his steed, which was not strictly tied, it shook itself loose, and ran carrying with it the scrip which held his scanty gold. Before he knew what had chanced, it was already afar. ¶ But one thing was there to do: to run after as fast as ever he could. He was, however, unable to overtake it before it came to a thicket in which one of the robbers that had fled was lying. When this man saw the horse, and knew that it was Oliver who pursued, he sprang out, and seizing the horse, mounted it and rode away. ¶ Now was Oliver alone on foot in the forest; his horse lost, and all that he possessed gone with him. He was in a strange land where he was all unknown, without a friend to whom he could turn for aid. ¶ One may well understand that he was stunned by this mischance. He could only cry out to God in this extreme misfortune, ¶ "O Heavenly Father, I pray Thee not to forsake me in this hour of calamity; for in Thee is my only hope and comfort. I see that fortune is entirely against me, and if Thou in Thy mercy comest not to my aid, my life is ended; and I cannot accomplish the great things which have been filling my mind. To Thy care I commend my all, and beg Thee to do therewith according to Thy holy will and pleasure. Nothing can be worse for me than what has now befallen; but I trust that this misfortune will be for the welfare of my soul." ¶ As Oliver thus lamented aloud his forlorn condition, a man sud-

denly appeared beside him, laid hold of his garment, and said to him. "King Oliver of Castile, be not cast down, nor wonder that I name thee and thy mighty kingdom." Oliver turned when he heard himself thus addressed, and knew not what to think, whether it was a dream or witchcraft. He made the sign of the cross, and cried out, "Who art thou? I confute thee, in the name of God, to do me no injury, and to tell me who has made thee acquainted with my name." The man, who had a handsome countenance, and was in appearance an honorable person, answered, "Oliver, my good friend, fear me not; for I am a good Christian, and believe as firmly in Jesus Christ as thou dost. Wonder not that I know thy name. Thou shouldst be aware that all the fields and the woods have heard, and know thee; for thy mischance has robbed thee of thy senses. Hadst thou remembered thy words thou must have recognized that thy complaints have been so loudly uttered that all who were near thee must have heard. Thus thou hast given me to understand that thou desirest to take part in the tournament to be held in London in six days. As thou hast lost thy horse and thy money, know that I am in debt to thee through a certain service which a near friend of thine, and thy well-wisher, has done for me. So I will help thee in thy commendable intent; and I pray God that he will grant thee grace to accomplish thy wish. As it is not possible to thee otherwise, I will furnish thee with armor and horses; and will serve thee in such manner as must satisfy thee. But in order that

my service to thee may take this form, thou must promise that, of all thou winnest in this tournament, thou wilt give one half to me, and that this vow, when thou hast made it, shall be faithfully kept by thee." Oliver listened to the fair promises of this man, who bore the appearance of a noble and wealthy knight, and wore the garments befitting such a station. Hearing also what was required of him in return, in his sore need, and bewilderment of mind, he made answer hastily, and scarcely thinking how much might grow out of his words: "My friend, the hour is now at hand when fortune may favor me if thou wilt aid me as thy words bespeak; and I on my part vow and swear by God in whom I believe, and by the blessedness that I hope to enjoy in heaven, and by all the heavenly host, that of whatever of richness and possessions come to me through this tournament thou shalt be the true inheritor of a half portion, or even of a larger part if thou chooseth to demand it." To these words the knight replied that he was content with the promise, and begged that Oliver would not forget it when the time should come, at which he might remind him of what he now engaged. He added that he would not speak of this again until the time came when he saw fit to claim his portion. "My dear friend Oliver," this mysterious person continued, "be not surprised at whatever may happen to thee from this time on. For the present, go forward on this road to the left hand, where thou wilt find a hermit's lodge, that lies, mayhap, a mile and a half from here. There take refuge, and await me; for I go not with

ther now ; but will seek thee there, and serve thee when the proper time shall come." And so they took leave of each other, and Oliver, first begging his new friend not to forget him, went his way. This personage rode away so quickly that, in the dusk of the evening which was now come, Oliver knew not whither he went ; but he forgot not the road that had been pointed out to him, walking forward upon it as fast as he could in the growing darkness ; but the night had fallen ere he reached the hermit's lodge. There found he the door closed and fast ; so he knocked upon it long and loud, until the hermit, who was about his evening devotions, being alarmed, drew near, and wondered what manner of man this might be, who importuned him for entrance at so late an hour ; for such a thing had never chanced before, and he was in two minds whether to open or not. However, after he had waited a good while, and the knocking still continued, his courage came to him, and he undid the door ; whereupon Oliver greeted him with courteous words ; to which the holy man made like reply, and asked him how he came in this lonely place at such an hour. "Dear Father," said Oliver, "I beg that you will permit me to be your guest and servant for this night ; for I know of no other place where I can find refuge." The pious hermit made him welcome, and said that this refuge and all that it contained were at his service. So Oliver entered, and the hermit shared with him his evening meal, which consisted of bread and water. "Friend," said the hermit, "you are not accustomed to live on such fare ; but take it not ill

that 't is simple ; for had I something better I would gladly give it you." They conversed for some time, but at length fell asleep. Oliver slept not late into the morning ; for the bed was not such as he was wont to sleep in ; the feathers on which he lay must, he thought, have been plucked from a very rough kind of goose. Therefore at daybreak he arose, and assisted the hermit to perform mass, to which he listened with earnest devotion, and commended himself to God and his dear Mother. When the mass was over, he made confession to the hermit ; and, in his confession, related that a strange knight had come to him in the wood, and had addressed him by his name. The good hermit questioned him ; and, after hearing his replies, said to him : "My dear brother and good friend, you say that his words were spoken to you in the name of God. If his intentions had been otherwise than good, he had not sent you to this place, which is a holy refuge, in which I hold myself unworthy to be the dweller. Therefore it seems to me that you will not do amiss if you follow his instructions ; for he is doubtless a knight of this realm, who chanced upon you in the wood, and became acquainted with your affairs, as he said, when you spoke of them to yourself, uttering your thoughts aloud. The best advice that I can give is to commend yourself to the care of God, and ask him to protect you from all evil and every snare of the wicked enemy of man." Oliver tarried in the wood with the hermit for four days, and now only two more would bring the day of the tournament. The chapel

and hermit's lodge were but a little way from the city of London, and if Oliver walked to the edge of the wood he could clearly see the city, and even the tilting field, for the barriers that enclosed the latter were already erected, and it was nearer than the city. ¶ He saw that the nobles met there to practise, that their horses might become expert, and that they might probe the strength of their harness. ¶ In seeing this he found, in truth, no great pleasure or satisfaction; for he was in much anxiety lest the knight should forget him, or should have intended to deceive him; and, as the time grew shorter, he was more and more troubled, and at times he was sorry that he had believed in an unknown helper, and given him his promise to wait; and he fretted that, instead of remaining with the hermit in the wood, he had not gone into the city, there to find among the many nobles, of whose riches and honorable character he had heard much good report in Canterbury, some one who might have given him the help which he needed. ¶ But he dared not do this now, fearing that the knight might come at any hour to the place where he had appointed to meet him; and he thought there would be much cause of complaint against him, if this unknown helper came and did not find him; and the loss would be his own. ¶ So passed the days before that on which the tournament was to be held; and at last the day came when all who were to take part in it should present themselves at the lists. ¶ No one can wonder that Oliver was in great dolor, and that his heart swelled with grief and disappointment as he stood before the little house in the wood.

If he heard even a single leaf fall from a branch, he started; for he thought that his knight was at last coming. He waited until he lost the last of his hope; then cast he himself upon the ground in utter despair. At this moment he heard the tramp of a troop of horsemen riding through the wood. He gave the sound no heed, for he supposed that it was a company of noblemen proceeding to the tournament; and his own hope was dead. But the sound of the horses now told him that the troop was coming to the lodge, whereupon he sprang to his feet, and turned toward them; then he saw fifteen noblemen come riding swiftly toward him. They were all clothed in black silk, and black were the horses they rode, with black housings; and their armor was of the same color, the sword of each sheathed in black velvet. Then came ten knights, who were clothed in long black velvet coats lined with martin; these led a beautiful black stallion, covered with cloth of gold, his bridle and trappings also trimmed with gold. After these came fifteen mounted squires, all their horses black with black trappings; and finally about sixty serving men also dressed in good black cloth.

Chapter vi. How Oliver came to the lists. Of the beauty of the princess of England. The first day of the tournament.

The tale tells that this troop of horsemen rode forward until they came to the hermit's lodge, where they halted, and greeted Oliver, who stood before the house. He returned their greetings with courtly grace; and as he now looked more nearly at him who rode at

the head of the company he recognized the knight with whom he had spoken



in the wood. At this he was very joyful, and went toward him with warm greetings. The knight dismounted to meet Oliver, embraced him, and said, "Oli-ver, my good friend, these people whom you see I have brought hither; and be it known to you that we have come from a far land to do thee honor. Therefore look to it that in the tourney thou bear-est thyself in such fashion that thou and we are honored, and our labors not lost through thy behavior." "My lord and most good friend," answered Oliver modestly, "you serve me so well that I know not how to deserve your favor. Still, whatever I can do, in that shall your goodness command me. This I am disposed, and bound in duty, to do at all times; for I place my body at your service, having no other means with which I can serve you. But I pray God and His dear Mother that they will give me grace that I may so succeed in my work, that I may be able to repay you for your generous aid, and that I may bring to pass my wishes in the present matter." When he had so spoken, the knight replied that it was

now full time that he should prepare himself and don his armor. Upon a beautiful green plot in front of the her-mit's lodge a great chair was placed, upon which Oliver sat while his ser-vants arrayed him for the tournament. When they had put on his armor, they rode to the tilting field, whither had al-ready come the king and his court, bring-ing with them the beautiful Princess Helena, his daughter, and a great train of lovely ladies and maidens. The princess was entertained in a magnifi-cent tent which had been erected accord-ing to her wish. This was hung about and decorated with Indian stuffs of wonderful colors and with cloth of gold, and in the midst a throne was raised ten steps above the ground, and over it was hung a canopy of black velvet em-broidered with flowers and adorned with numberless oriental pearls, and as a central ornament a noble carbuncle, that glittered so brightly that it was a mar-vel to see. Upon the chair of state, above described, sat the king's daugh-ter, around her were her maidens. Other ladies and young maidens sat in places which had been arranged for them, and they were a great multitude and a gal-lary of beauty. The judges who were to decide the destiny of their princess sat with her in the tent. On the other side sat the king with many great princes, lords, and councillors. Let every reader of this tale think what a pleasure it was to see such a gallant array of princes, lords, ladies, and damsels, all richly dressed, the magnificent pavilions deco-rated with dazzling splendor, the flying pennons, the many colored plumes, the rich armor, and, beyond all these, the

great multitude of the people gathered from far and near to see this wonderful show. Above all, the beautiful princess was most richly dressed; for, as this festival was held on her account and in her honor, it was fitting that she should be queenly and splendid beyond all other ladies. The brilliancy of the precious gems that adorned her seemed to be kindled into brighter splendor by her lovely face, and to borrow from it the beauty with which they shone, so that all those who looked upon her might well think that they beheld a being of more than earthly loveliness. At her birth nature had endowed her with greater charms and beauty than any other child in all that land. Beautiful as were her face and her sweet body, so her virtues and her mien. Of all the qualities that should adorn the daughter of a king, none was lacking in her. Therefore might the victor in this contest think that he was born into the world in a happy hour, and that he won with her hand a treasure and a jewel, the rose of all the roses in the world. Among all the young knights who had come to this tournament, there was not one but was determined to win, or remain dead upon the field, which latter alternative, indeed, befell many, as the tale shall tell. As soon as the ladies were seated in their places, the four hundred knights, the challengers, took their places in the lists, as had been arranged, to await the coming of all who desired to tilt with them, while gaily dressed heralds proclaimed the lists open for three days. During the first day they were to tilt with lances. On the second, the contest was to be on horseback with

swords for weapons; the custom being then, as now, to be armed with sharp and heavy hitting weapons; and none might refuse to encounter the stroke of another knight. On the third day the contestants must appear on foot, and each knight might be armed with a battle-axe, besides the good sword he carried at his side. The field was well suited for the tourney, being long and wide, as was necessary where so many horsemen were to encounter, and it was visible, in all parts, to the spectators. When it was known that the king, the princess, and all the ladies, guests, and nobility had arrived at the field, and that the ladies were arranged to see the spectacle according to their rank, there was great emulation among the knights to be the first upon the field; but Oliver was not among the first, many having entered the lists before him. There was a king from a kingdom called Scotland, and three kings of Ireland, and many princes and nobles, so richly equipped that it was impossible to make a more magnificent display. Few spears had been broken before Oliver's coming, who, when he entered the lists, touched his horse with the spurs, causing the fair steed to advance slowly, with arching neck, dancing hoofs, and foam-flecked bit, both knight and horse bearing themselves so nobly that all eyes were drawn to them; and the ladies, who looked on Oliver with especial favor, said that he was a stately knight, and that none other in the field was more splendidly equipped. Now was there tilting on every hand, and each one strove to show his utmost prowess. The knight who was Oliver's adviser

said to him, ¶ "Look yonder where sits the beautiful princess whom thou mayest win if thou bearest thyself manfully; look to it that thou fail not to do thy best, that through thee we be honored." ¶ Then he took a spear that had been made by order of the judges, for no one might use a spear that was longer than that of another, and gave it to Oliver, who ill understood what was said to him, for his eyes and his mind were fixed on her who had been shown to him, and he could not withdraw them, eyes and mind being alike dazzled by her beauty. ¶ He took the spear, and held it in rest, but as one in a dream, who knew not what he did. ¶ When the knight saw his condition he said, "O my dear friend Oliver, you sleep; awake!" ¶ Then, as one who wakes from slumber, and knows not where he is, Oliver struck his horse with the spurs, not looking about him to see whither he rode; and, so riding, his spear, which was very strong, struck against a bridge



on which many people stood, with a blow so violent that a part of the bridge fell, and many people with it. Then was there great laughter over this accident, as well as much wonder at the mighty force of

the blow. ¶ The ladies spake lightly of it, saying that his helmet had not been rightly adjusted, so that he saw not well, or that he had not been able to completely control his fiery stallion. While they yet spake Oliver rode round with the other knights, and a fresh spear was given into his hand; but he felt himself disgraced by the bad beginning that he had made. ¶ As he rode again in the lists it chanced that his opponent was a king of Ireland, whose name was Macnamore; and him he overthrew, horse and knight. ¶ Then was heard the humorous proclamation of a herald, ¶ "This free knight in black armor with the first blow of his spear brought down an hundred men; with his second stroke he has overthrown a king, and borne him to the earth: let all men wonder, for behold he has received no wound!" ¶ Oliver heard these words and the laughter that followed them. Comprehending that he had excited ridicule, he set himself firmly to win more solid fame and praise; and thenceforth he could not receive lances fast enough; for he shivered them in splinters to the wonder of all. His horse was excellent, and against his skill no one prevailed. So he was, as he well merited, the most observed of all the knights in the lists, especially by the ladies and damsels; for he was, indeed, a gallant knight, highly accomplished, and exceedingly fortunate in all encounters. ¶ So each knight did his best, and many gallant deeds were done by the many noble knights there assembled, whether they were of the native lords, or of the foreign knights who had come to win honor and do service on account of the beautiful Princess Helena. ¶ But, in

the judgment of all, Oliver had won from all the other knights the prize on that first day of the tournament. ¶ Helena was gratified at this, although she endeavored not to show it outwardly. ¶ When asked who had pleased her best, she thought of Oliver, but did not name him, wondering who this stranger knight could be, who had borne himself so successfully in the lists, and had worn his fair arms so nobly. She thought he was so accomplished in arms and so gallant of mien that he was certainly the blossom of manhood among all those who were present in this field of knightly deeds. ¶ The jousting was kept up with great vigor until night, when the fall of darkness compelled the contestants to part from one another. The king and his daughter returned to the city; so was there an end of the tilting with lances, and of the first day of the tournament. ¶ Among the knights, while they were putting off their armor, was much talk of the black knight; and they said among themselves, that they would gladly see him in doublet and breeches, and questioned whether he would show himself as handsome in person, and as accomplished in bearing, as he was in armor. ¶ Then, too, they asked each other if he would prove as skillful in arms on foot as on horseback. ¶ Among the ladies, also, this mysterious knight was a topic of conversation, but these had no doubts about his beauty and grace in any dress; nor was there any question with them of his skill with sword or battle-axe: they but declared that he was a perfect knight and gentleman, so much had he charmed all their hearts. ¶ Many, who might otherwise have re-

mained at their lodgings, went to the court in hope to see him, though they all knew that no prize or praise was to be adjudged until the third day had ended. ¶ When the dancing began, and the black knight did not appear, though all looked eagerly for him, there was general disappointment. ¶ Oliver returned to the hermit in the wood; for the knight who had put him so successfully in the field thus advised him at the close of the jousting when he took leave of him and rode away with his people; but first he told him to have no anxiety, as he would come for him again the next morning in good time. ¶ Oliver thanked him warmly, and returned to spend the night with his hermit. He there gave thanks to God for the aid granted him on that day, and prayed him to bestow further help in the coming time. ¶ The holy hermit did what he could for him, but Oliver fared not so well with him as did those who were the guests at the court. There the dancers filled a hall so large that tilting might have been performed in it; and, in like manner as Helena had been seated at the tourney, a similar high chair of state was placed for her, where all might see her. ¶ When the dancing had lasted long, a sleeping cup of generous wine, flavored with many spices, was offered to all; then the princess was conducted to her seat, and her ladies and maidens went with her. ¶ So the first day of the great tournament came to an end, and it may well be thought that the knights who had jostled so stoutly slept well, and needed the rest of sweet hours of slumber to renew their strength for the labors of the morrow.

Chapter vii. The second day of the tournament.



The night passed, and the new day came; then the knights were up betimes preparing themselves for the field according to the rules announced on the former day. As the hour approached when the lists would be opened, Oliver saw a great company riding toward him, who now wore dresses of red color, made like those of yesterday, which then were black, the color alone being changed. As they drew near, their leader, dressed in a long coat of crimson, greeted Oliver, who returned his greeting, and thanked this good friend most heartily. Behind the knight came the stallion that Oliver was to ride, and the knights and the serving men, as on the former day; but all there were clothed in one color, which to-day was crimson, as yesterday it was black. The stallion for Oliver's use was a bright bay, and upon him a gold embroidered saddle-cloth, that was a wonder of the saddler's art. On this day Oliver came to the field among the first, when the ladies had just taken their places to witness the battle of the swords. He was so magnificently mounted and attended that he

attracted the attention of the king, his beautiful daughter, and, in truth, of all that great assembly. He was aware of this, and rode most gracefully, as he was less heavily armed than on the previous day, in order that he might have more freedom to wield his sword. His horse proving not so manageable as he wished, which seemed to him a serious fault, he took instead the horse of one of his knights, a small but beautiful and intelligent animal, upon which he could better exercise his horsemanship, and move with more rapidity. So mounted, the ladies looked on him with increasing favor. He ran a course against a renowned knight, and encountered him with such skill that great shouts of praise and admiration arose. And the multitude cried, "Behold this knight, and give heed to him; for he looks like the doer of great deeds. When his horse leaps, or runs, he sits as firmly in the saddle as if horse and man were one." While they thus cried, the son of the king of Scotland rode into the field, attended by many strong and accomplished knights who were to follow him in the day's strife, a chosen number of them being commanded to keep always near him. Now came also King Macnamore, two kings from other lands, whose names the tale telleth not, a duke of Britain, the Lord of Bourbon, the Lord of Gloucester, the Count of Flanders, and the Lord of Brussels. There were many others of distinguished name and place, whom it would take too long to name. When now these princes and nobles were all assembled, and there were no others to come, the heralds announced, by command of the king, that the lists

were open, and that each knight contestant was to do his best. ¶ The knights were arrayed in two parties: those who held the lists, and those who were to contest the field with them; and when these two companies rushed against each other a great struggle was fought, in which many a knight had his helmet cut in two, or was otherwise disabled. ¶ Oliver sat firmly on his horse, his good sword in his hand, wherewith he defended himself in knightly fashion, giving and taking many heavy strokes, and always, by his skill, strength, and happy fortune, victorious and unharmed in his many encounters. He rode defiantly among the combatants, and sought at all times the most powerful opponents, wishing to fight only with such. When he thought of Helena, and that she was a witness to the fray, a remembrance that was constantly in his mind, his strength became twofold, and his courage and prowess greatly increased. Therefore it is not possible to relate all the deeds that were done by him, and by all the other valiant knights, upon this gallantly contested field. ¶ It was an order of the day that, if the banner of the challengers, which was carried in the midst of those who were the defenders of the lists, should be taken from them by the opposing party, carried by them to a certain appointed place, and there set up, the contest of the day should come to an end. Therefore those who had come from other lands, of whom the victorious red knight was soon tacitly recognized as the leader, strove constantly to win this prize from the native knights, by whom it was skillfully and vigorously defended. ¶ At length

Oliver, who never remained long in one place, and before whom all gave way, succeeded in forcing his passage, at the head of a strong party of foreign knights, to the standard of the challengers, and, drawing near to the knight who carried it, gave him such a stroke with his sword upon the helmet that his head was beaten down to his horse's neck, and he fell to the earth, stunned for the moment by the force of the blow; but immediately coming to himself and still grasping the standard, he raised himself into the posture of defense. Then Oliver made another blow, with the intent to cut down the staff on which the banner hung; this staff, however, was so strengthened by iron rods that he could not sever it; but his stroke was so powerful that the standard was beaten out of the hand of its bearer and fell to the earth. Then went up a great shout from both parties. Those who defended the standard fought manly to regain it, but this they might not do; for Oliver guarded it with his victorious sword, and was faithfully supported by his powerful party of foreign knights. ¶ Many knights were slain on both sides in this struggle for the banner; but the greater number of these were of the party of the English. The king, who overlooked the combat, was very ill-pleased that so many of his knights and dear friends were killed. He therefore ordered the noblemen who were marshals of the field to endeavor to put an end to the struggle, and separate the combatants; and he was so terrified at the deadly character of the mêlée that he bade them ride quickly, and prevent a continuance of the slaughter, in which

so many were already dead and wounded. ¶ But the tale tells that one of those whom the king had ordered to stop the combat was a very bold and reckless knight, who threw himself upon Oliver, being very angry with him, and wishing to kill him because he had slain so many English nobles. ¶ When Oliver saw his fell intent, and that he grasped his sword in both hands to smite, he stung aloft his own sword before the other could strike, and with a sweeping blow cut off both his arms, so that they fell to the ground. ¶ All who saw this stroke were amazed, and, among them, the king, who crossed himself, and cried out, ¶ "What a mighty knight is this, clothed in red! it is he who was yesterday in black, which should be his lifelong color. If he be not stayed, he will rob me of all my bravest knights. I believe that he must be the foul fiend in living form. See how his sword betrays! He has so used it that it has become of the color of his dress." ¶ The king said further, ¶ "Let no one regret the knight whom he has just slain; for he was not obeying my orders when he was cut down; but maliciously disobeying them, therefore he was rightly punished." ¶ When the king sent more marshals and all the noblemen about him to stop the fighting; but, none the less, he kept Oliver in view, and perceived that he had now learned the will of the king, and was aiding the marshals to separate the combatants. ¶ During the mêlée, the ladies, though filled with horror at the bloody spectacle, could not withdraw their eyes from observing every act of the red knight. But at length the princess, though fascinated by his daring,

could no longer look upon his deeds; but turned away her pitying eyes, unable to bear the sight of the slaying of her countrymen, the English knights. ¶ The combatants were now separated; and the king ordered announcement to be made, that no knight, on pain of losing his head, should again during that day, either in earnest or in sport, fight in the lists. All obeyed the mandate of the king, and each living combatant, who was able to do so, withdrew from the lists. ¶ Oliver rode away with the knight who had befriended him; for the latter, on this day, went with him to the house of the hermit. When they were come thither, the knight blessed Oliver, and took leave of him, as did also all the attendants. Oliver thanked them courteously; and the knight, in leaving, bade him sleep without anxiety for the following day, as he would not forget him, ¶ The king and his daughter returned to the palace; and, when she was alone with her father, wearied by the long day and deeply distressed and saddened by the death of so many noble and brave knights, she said, ¶ "O my dearest father, art thou not troubled and grieved that thou hast seen to-day so many of our best and noblest friends perish miserably without good cause, as I think? for it has happened on my account, or at least in my name, and I am sick at heart, and ready to forswear all men henceforth. Therefore I beg thee to promise me that no tilting, or fighting with swords, shall again take place in such fatal manner as to-day." ¶ "O my daughter," said the king, "thou art a good child; but grieve not, nor take to heart this day's work. The fault was none

of thine. For that which has happened I am perhaps more sorrowful than thou art, and a part of the fault may have been mine. I will prove that it shall not happen again, as it did to-day, when I little foresaw such disaster and so sad an ending. Death in the lists, thou knowest, is common; but these sports cannot be done away, as they tend to preserve the war-training of our people, which is of high import for the defence of our realm." ¶ Thereupon he wished her good-night, and said that he knew she would that night have no pleasure in dancing; to which she answered that she would prefer to rest, and try to forget. So there was no dancing that evening. ¶ When the king went to his chamber, he made inquiry how many knights were found dead upon the field, and was told there were forty-six of the English and fifteen from other lands. ¶ At this report he was very grieved and angry, but ordered that another six and forty knights be chosen to take the places of the dead on the morrow, and also, if there were some wounded who might die if they continued in armor, that their places be likewise filled by able knights; and this was done according to his wishes.

Chapter viii. The third day of the tournament.

When the next day came the king arose, and with his daughter heard mass, after which they took their morning meal together. While they were eating, the king and those who were with him spoke of nothing but yesterday's contest, its incidents, and the disaster in which it had ended.

¶ The king said that it troubled him greatly that he had not yet seen more nearly the knight who had borne himself so victoriously upon the two preceding days; and he gave orders that twenty knights should keep watch on Oliver, that he went not away that evening, avoiding the festival as he had done before; and he commanded them to bring this reluctant knight before him, with all honor and kindness, for he desired, above all things, to see him; and also deemed it fitting, after his deeds of the two days, that he should be present at the adjudging of the prize. ¶ He also ordered that the number of guards to aid the marshals, and carry out any orders that he might give for tempering the contest, should be increased from two thousand to four thousand. ¶ While the king and his court circle still talked together of the mysterious black and red knight, there came the steward of the palace, a very busy man, who had many particulars for the king's decision, and so held, for the rest of the time, the king's ear, as they were making great preparations for the evening feast and festival, which had been ordered to be in grandest state, with the most costly luxuries to be obtained; for this was designed to be the most splendid banquet that had ever been attempted in the palace or known in the kingdom. ¶ Now the time was near when every one should be in his and her appointed place, to do or behold the deeds of the third day of the tournament. ¶ The four thousand guards were stationed in suitable position to prevent any one disposed to raise a tumult, or make any affront to the dignity

or safety of the festival, but the most of those in that great assembly were more inclined to join in ceremony and display than be drawn into a mêlée, such as had befallen on the day before. ¶ Oliver wore a white dress exactly similar, except in color, to that of the previous day; and all his retinue of knights, squires, and servants were also clad in white. His horses, too, were snow-white, with trappings to match, not less magnificent than on the other two days. ¶ He entered the lists on a beautiful stallion, and took place beside the king of Scotland. They all dismounted, and came together, prepared for the encounter they were now to make on foot. ¶ The king sent knights to inquire how many there were of foreign lineage; these went down into the field, and told the marshals how the king had commanded them to ascertain the number of the combatants. The marshals, who were to make the count, took a chain from a hat, and made it fast to two lances, under which each of the knights must pass singly; so were they counted; and it was found that there were of those who had come from foreign lands to take part in this contest four hundred. ¶ When this was done, a herald proclaimed that it was the king's will that every knight should ungird his sword, and lay it aside; as he deemed it enough that each should be armed with a battle-axe, with which to do combat; and he bade every one take heed that he strike no one on the head with his axe. And the herald further proclaimed that the prize of the tournament would be awarded to the winner on the evening of that day, at

the festival in the palace. ¶ Soon after this a great blast of trumpets sounded for the contest of the battle-axes to begin. ¶ When it was a gallant sight to see how the knights rushed into conflict, and many bright eyes sparkled when they saw how Oliver led the advance of the foreign knights, and how lightly he swung his axe in the air. ¶ When the two parties came together, there was little science or skilful manœuvre; for each raised the strong right arm, inherited from his father, and brought down his axe with all his force. ¶ There was no chance for pity in such a mêlée. Oliver gave so mighty blows in every direction, that whoever saw him prepare to strike drew back from before him, and few dared await the stroke. ¶ He struck so mightily, that his axe, though very strong, broke in his hand, which seemed for the moment most disastrous; but when he saw that his weapon was useless, he cast it down, and sprang fearlessly upon a knight near him, and wrested the axe from his hands, despite a desperate resistance, throwing his opponent upon the blood-stained ground of the battle lists. ¶ When this axe was also broken, he captured another in like manner. ¶ There were two kings of Ireland, who saw the wonderful deeds that Oliver did, and were sorely vexed thereby; for it had become plain to them, as it was indeed to all, that the prize of the tournament would be won by him. In exceeding insolence and anger, they both attacked him at once, which was contrary to all usage and knightly courtesy. Defending himself, Oliver struck one of them dead with a single blow of his axe, and bore

down powerfully on the other, driving him back. ¶ The king of England was watching this encounter, and decided that the contest must no longer continue, if he would not have great bloodshed grow out of it, and many dead, as in yesterday's mêlée; therefore he caused announcement to be instantly and loudly proclaimed that, from that moment, he forbade the contest to go on, and that all must separate on pain to body and to prosperity. So the combatants were separated, whether they were glad or sorry. ¶ The king of England and his daughter, with all their court people, returned to the palace, and the knights of the tournament went back to their lodgings in the city. The body of the dead king was taken up by his people, laid in a car covered with black velvet, borne to his kingdom in Ireland, and there buried in state. ¶ Oliver looked about him for his knight and his horse, and called aloud for his people; but no one came or answered him. He was in much astonishment when he found none of those who had brought him thither, and was greatly troubled what he should do. ¶ Though still in complete armor, he undertook to go on foot to the house of the hermit in the wood, for he knew not where else to seek for lodging. This he did, murmuring to himself that it seemed clear that misfortune had again befallen him, and that the hour had come in which fate should turn against him, ¶ So, overclouded by gloom, he judged that he must leave the good things that had seemed to be falling into his hands, and which he was very unwilling that any one in the world instead of him should

have. ¶ While he went heavily on his way, his mind completely filled with his misfortune, the twenty knights, commanded by the king to bring him to the court, were diligently seeking him, for some time they could find no trace of him, having lost him in the confusion of the breaking up of the tournament; but riding about in many directions, a party of them at length discovered him, walking slowly and moodily back to the hermit's lodge. These followed him swiftly, putting spurs to their horses, and came up to him, when their leader thus addressed him, ¶ "Noble knight, be not angry with us that we obey the command laid upon us by the king; for he has ordered us to find you, and begs that you will, on this night, remain with him for the supper, the festival, and the dance. Therefore, in obedience to our master's commands, we must conduct you to him." ¶ Now Oliver was constrained to do whatever the king commanded, therefore he turned him back to go with the knights, in great mortification that he had no fitting apparel in which to appear at court; and this was the more distressing to his mind when he remembered the elegance of the costumes he had worn, and the magnificence of his equipages, upon his former appearances before the king, the princess, and the nobility of England. Now he found himself alone, unknown, and compelled to be present at a festival, with other princes and nobles richly clad and numerousy accompanied, while he had no other garb than his battered armor; he felt that in such guise he would be a grim and ridiculous visitant at a feast. Although the

knight, his conductor, placed him upon the best horse in the troop, and showed him every respect and courtesy, yet his thoughts, in this return to the city, were scarcely less gloomy than when he trudged on foot toward the lodge of the hermit, and in his mortification he wished himself a thousand leagues away. When they came into the city, his conducting knight led him at once to his own lodging, placed him therein, and after so lodging him inquired where his servants were, that he might send for them. ¶ Poor Oliver was red with shame when he replied, ¶ "Truly I know not where they are; therefore I cannot tell you; but I must this night be, myself, both master and servant." ¶ While they were thus speaking, came the landlord of the house to Oliver, and bade him welcome, in God's name, to his house, saying privately to him, ¶ "One of your servants came to me not long since, and gave me a package, telling me that your clothes are therein; and he has also placed a bag under the head of the bed. Moreover he bade me say to you that you will immediately have new servants, for those who have waited on you until now are gone, and you will see them no more; also that the knight whom you know greets you well, and begs you not to forget what you have promised him, and that you bear it in remembrance at the proper time." ¶ When Oliver heard the landlord speak thus, he was filled with amazement; for he had never been in this house before, and he marvelled what it could mean, that the clothes and other things had been sent to him here, the sender having known where was to

be his lodging, when he himself had no knowledge or intimation of it, and where he had come by chance, as it seemed to him. ¶ Was it a snare of the evil one? He crossed himself; but remembering that the knight, who had been so truly his friend, and of whom he could think no evil, was the sender of a message here, as well as the giver of the package and bag spoken of by his landlord, he resolved to avail himself of the good fortune thus mysteriously sent, and of which he so much stood in need. ¶ Then he went into the chamber which the landlord showed him, and when he was alone sought under the bed, at the head, and found there a bag, as the landlord had said, and, by it, the key of the lock with which it was made fast. Opening the bag, he found it full of gold, good English nobles; and he was very glad to be thus put in condition to appear properly. ¶ Then he went out to speak further with the knight who had brought him where he had found so much good fortune, but was told that he had gone to change his armor for an evening dress; so returning to his chamber, being alone, and it was not yet time to go to the court, he sat down and counted the gold, and found there five thousand nobles. When he had completed the count, he gave thanks to God for his grace, and also to the knight who had so thought of his needs. ¶ After he had put the gold again into the bag, there came to him in his chamber five beautiful youths dressed in white silk, and ten others clad in white cloth. They greeted Oliver, and said, ¶ "Gracious lord, your steward came to us this morning, and gave to each a white

dress, saying it was your color, and that you would take us into your service; so we are come to you, to learn if this be your will. There is no one among us who has not had a noble master; some of us have been servants of the Count of Flanders, others of the lord of Brussels: therefore each, as I have said, has a noble master. But these lords have more servants than they require or desire, therefore we are free; and in consequence of the noble deeds we have seen you do, we wish to serve you, if such be your will." "Dear friends," replied Oliver, "out of your own goodness you say more good things of me than I deserve, and I understand that each of you has had a better master than I am; but since it is your wish, I take you into my service, and to-morrow, when I learn that you are known people, I will provide for you, and appoint for each the duties in which he is skilled." One of the servants replied, "Gracious master, your steward has directed that I shall be your master of the stables; so may it please you to give orders which of your horses shall now await your use. There are in your stables, below, five beautiful stallions, and two mares that are small and fine. These I will take charge of, and do in all things as well as I can, since the steward has given me charge of the horses, and if such be your will. Therefore, gracious master, as it is far from here to the palace, will it please you to say to me which horse shall be prepared for your present use; and I pray you, tell me also which saddle-cloth shall be laid over the saddle, that with figured velvet, or one embroidered with gold,

and if four mounted attendants shall be in waiting on you." Oliver was more surprised at such astonishing good fortune than he had been before; he crossed himself devoutly, then said, "My good friend, go, in the name of God, and saddle for me the one of the two smaller horses that seems to you most fitting; and place on the saddle the embroidered cloth. Send, also, the serving men with torches, that they light me to the court." When Oliver commanded to undo the package containing his costumes. This was straightway done, and therein were found three suits of the colors he had worn on the three days; namely, black, red, and white. The coats and breeches were of velvet, the waistcoats of silk damask, and the three beautiful caps were each richly decorated with precious stones and enamels. There was also a fine sword in a scabbard of jewelled and enamelled gold, and other rich ornaments suitable to the court costume of a prince. When Oliver beheld this magnificence, he cried, "O gracious and beneficent God, if Thou showest so much grace to me that the hour may come when Oliver and the beautiful Helena may be as closely and holily united as the two letters woven together on this cap, then were I forever in debt to Thy holy favor!" When Oliver dressed himself for the festival; and the clothes fitted him as perfectly as if they had been moulded upon him, When he was dressed, his horse was also ready, and stood before the house, with the four mounted attendants. Soon came the knight who had brought him hither, saying that he would attend him to the court and that it was full

time they were on the way. When the torches were lighted, and they rode together to the court.

Chapter ix. Of the festivity at the English Court in honor of the King's daughter and of the victor of the tournament, and what was done thereat.



When Oliver came to the gateway of the palace he so touched his horse with the spurs that it made the most graceful curbets that had ever been seen, and, as its master desired, struck fire from the stones of the pavement, so that every one was drawn to the windows to see him as he rode up under the light of flaming torches. In his magnificent court dress he was so princely and charming a person that no one could satisfy himself with gazing; and so many people were present when he dismounted that his attendants had to make a way for him through them; and, if he had been a monster of the sea, there might not have been more wonder, nor a greater assemblage of people to behold him. And it was told to the king and his court that the white knight had come and was now entering the palace, and that such was his resplendent beauty that its like had never before been

seen, for it was nature's masterpiece.

When this report came the ladies asked one of another, "Whence comes this fairy knight, this prince of a golden land of romance, this being brighter and more valiant than the world has ever before seen? — Happy are we that he has come to our land and to our court."

And whispers and half whispers and replies ran round the circle of court dames, damsels, and their attendant knights; then might it have been noticed that the knights were disposed to sneer, but the ladies had nothing but praise to utter. In the midst of a murmur of such low-spoken words, Oliver entered the hall, where the court was assembled; and the murmur died into silence, all listening to hear the words he might speak. He greeted the king, the ladies, the nobles, all the court circle, with princely courtesy and courtly words; to which the king and nobles responded in like manner, and received him with great distinction and dignified hospitality; but, at the same time, certain glances flashed under masculine brows, high-arched into court smiles, as if to say, that they did not find him so excessively beautiful or charming; and in the hearts of these were many most sincere wishes that this princely visitor's face and all of his body had been an hundred miles away, or back in his own fairyland, instead of here, where he had so victoriously won the highest praise in the tournament, and was now winning the admiration of every lady's heart. This was envy, the vice of courts; for Oliver was amiable and modest, as charming in manners as in person, always courteous to infe-

riors, and unassuming with princes, nobles, and knights; so that there was no reason why any one should feel enmity to him; and it could only be evil lurking in those hearts that wished him harm; and these courtiers, behind their ceremonious smiles, did wish him all kinds of harm. Besides, he was a probable obstacle in the path of many a court ambition. ¶ While Oliver was thus received with the courtesy of professed admiration by every one, the princess Helena, attended by many princes, nobles, and ladies of the court, came into the hall, which was magnificently decorated. Her dress was so richly ornamental that it was worth a dukedom, and she had never before worn one so splendid. ¶ But it was her beauty that gave its greatest brightness to the hall; for she was fair beyond the fairness of other women, fair as that other Helen, for whom the lofty walls of Troy were laid low — that god-born Helen, so beautiful that, in a land of world-famed beauty, she was peerless; so beautiful that her name descended through the ages as a synonym of female beauty; so beautiful as to set the world in arms for her possession. ¶ But this tale must now proceed to the direct matter of its history. ¶ When the princess came near her father, she knelt before him, and did him reverence, as was fitting for a subject, though a daughter. The king took her hand, raised her up, and bade her welcome in God's name. She was greeted, also, by all the princes and nobles, to whom, separately, she gave thanks for their courtesy in fitting words, as she well knew how to do. ¶ Oliver, whom she recognized from his noble and ele-

gant appearance, was brought before her, and she bade him welcome in few and modest words. Her heart at once went out toward him as he replied to her welcome in courtly and well-chosen sentences, looking up into her face in respectful admiration. At this meeting of two beautiful ones it was necessary to ask the knights to stand back that the ladies might look on Oliver and the princess, as it was their wish to do. Of the unwedded ladies, — perhaps of the wedded dames, too, — each one said to herself, or had the half-confessed thought, ¶ “Would to God that this noble stranger were my husband, and had won me, as he has won our princess,” for they all gave him the prize, as the most valiant and successful knight. ¶ While that which has been related took place, the banquet was made ready; and as soon as all was prepared, the loud sounding of trumpets summoned every one to prepare for the feast, and to wash the hands. ¶ The king stood up, and with him many great lords; these went to Oliver by the king's command, and asked him to make known whence he came, and what was his rank and family. ¶ He answered that Spain was the land of his birth, that he was a poor knight of no high rank, his family noble, but obscure. ¶ This was believed neither by the king nor by the others who heard it; for it seemed to them all that his bearing and mien betokened that he was born of a princely house; his manners showed intimate acquaintance with the etiquette of royal courts; and as to poverty, that was absurd in connection with the state which he had maintained during the last three days;

for how could he provide himself with dress, armor, and equipage, unless by the command of wealth: the gems alone that sparkled on his costume exceeded in value the fortune of many a wealthy knight. So they all concluded that he was resolved to disguise high rank beneath the assumption of lower station. ¶ The king took his seat at table, and with him his highest princes and favorites; but the princess Helena was seated in the middle of the room, at a table raised above the others, that all might have the pleasure of seeing her. At the table with her, on her right hand, was the chief judge, and the princes and ladies who were the other judges sat also at her table. ¶ Oliver, at first, made many polite excuses before he would consent to sit at the king's table, at a place reserved for him beside the king; but, entreated by the monarch, he could no longer refuse, so he modestly took the seat assigned him, according to the king's wish. Soon all were seated, the nobles, knights, ladies, and young maidens, a great and splendid company. ¶ To relate the service at table, and recount the rare and delicious dishes that were placed before the guests, would baffle the tale too long: it was a royal feast, and all were delighted; but above all the pleasures of the table and the splendor of the scene, that which was most pleasing to the eye and heart — and in this all were agreed — was the beautiful princess, who was a refreshment to the weary and an encouragement to manliness; and there was no one of all the great company of nobles, knights, and gentlemen who would not, in her service, have dared the utmost

danger. ¶ During the repast the king paid much attention to Oliver, conversing freely with him, and constantly charmed by his modest, wise, and witty replies. ¶ When the feast had long continued, the cloth was removed, and every one stood up; then, after grace was said and thanks given to God for all the good things enjoyed, the dance began. ¶ When the dancing commenced, the ten princes and ten ladies whom the king had chosen to be the judges of the tournament went into a room apart, and consulted upon the question, who had won the most fame, and done the most gallant deeds, during the three days? In this they were not of one mind; for one judge held that it was the son of the king of Scotland; another would have it given to the Count of Flanders; but the others insisted that it was due to the Spanish knight. At length, after considerable discussion, the two dissenting ones were brought to agree with the others, and all united in giving their voices for the favorite knight. ¶ When the king was informed that they were ready with their judgment, he left the dance, went into the chamber where they were sitting, and asked them what they had decided. Whereupon they fell upon their knees to reply; but he bade them stand up and make their answer. So the chief judge gave their decision in these words: ¶ "Gracious master, we have faithfully done thy will in this matter, having been sworn to be moved in our judgment by no influence of love or disfavor, by no opinions or wishes expressed to us by any person whatever; but to decide through simple justice, as our own rea-

son dictates, and through fear of no one, neither prince nor lord, however high in rank or family. This oath has been kept; and this is our true judgment, in which we are all agreed: that of all those who took part in the tournament no one has shown himself so skilful in arms, so successful in combat, so valiant of daring, so gallant in deeds during the three days, as the Spanish knight, who appeared in the lists on the first day in black, on the second day in red, and on the third day in white. We declare that he surpassed all others; and therefore we make known to thy grace that it is our decision that the Spanish knight has won the prize; and we so place the matter in thy hands, that thou mayest act in such manner as is thy will.”

“Good friends, dear cousins, and most amiable and beloved ladies,” answered the king, “I understand your judgment, and how you have come to make it, and acknowledge that it would be against all justice and right to withhold the praise and reward from the knight who has so well earned it by his knightly service; and, indeed, had I been of the judges, my decision would have been the same that you have made; and I thank you all for your labors and for your faithfulness. But, considering well the future, our interests and honor, and that the prize must be given to a foreigner who is entirely unknown to us, it seems prudent to advise this, — if it seems good to you, — that one of you say to him, that the prize and the honor have been won by him before all others, and that it is adjudged by you all that my daughter be given to him; but one condition I beg of him: that he

remain a year at my court before the marriage, in order that we may learn his character more fully. But I herewith promise, by my crown, — and this promise shall be unalterable, — that at the end of the year I will give him the princess in marriage, if I find him no other than I now see and think; for, in that case, no man in the world is more worthy of her than he. In this I would have him believe that there is no thought to take from him that which he has won by his knightly deeds. Also may you say to him, that I do not wish to put him at enmity with powerful princes and nobles now here, who came from far and near for the purpose of winning the prize of the tournament. If my daughter were given him while they are yet here they would grudge him the honor; and through envy and hatred seek to assail him; whereby there might be great danger to his life and disturbance of the realm. It is therefore my wish that this should be said to him in such manner that he may understand, and be fully satisfied.”

When he had finished speaking the princes and ladies went into council again together, and found that the king had spoken well; and they decided that it was best to know what answer the Spanish knight would make, before these words and this request were publicly announced; for it would be a great dishonor to the king if his demand were refused before so many princes and nobles. They were well satisfied that the king was right, in that it was necessary to know, more surely than they did at present, what manner of man this, their favorite knight, was; for

Too much of haste to do a thing,
Sorrow and sore regret may bring.

¶ The judge who was chosen to speak with Oliver sought him out in the hall among the dancers, took him by the elbow, and led him apart to tell him what the king proposed. ¶ Oliver had feared the result, for the reason that there were here so many powerful princes and nobles, to whom the king would naturally prefer to give his daughter, rather than to an unknown knight; for these might be of more promise of aid and service than could be expected of him; also he knew that, in their displeasure, it was possible that they might unite their strengths, and make much trouble for the king. ¶ Therefore he was partly prepared for the communication of the judge, and thought to himself that, if he did not willingly consent to the request now made of him, the judges might reconsider their decision; and so he might lose forever the prize now offered him on these conditions; so he cheerfully gave his consent to what was proposed, and replied, ¶ "Gracious lord, you are overkind to me; for I am not deserving of the beautiful English princess and this great alliance; still, as you inform me that the king and his council have awarded me such wonderful good fortune, and that it is by his wish that you make this request of me, I gratefully accept the award; and reply, that it is not necessary that he should ask this thing of me, as one who has something to entreat; for I have no desire to oppose his will." ¶ The prince returned to the king, to whom he related what had passed in his interview with Oliver, and said that he had never heard

any one speak more wisely, modestly, or courteously, or in a way more deserving of honor and praise, than that knight. ¶ The king was very joyful at this reply, and decided that the jewel, which, in addition to the hand of the princess, was a prize of the tournament, should be immediately given; and he named a knight who should present it, saying to him, that when the proper time came he would give the signal to bring it; all of which was done according to his wish. ¶ He then left the chamber of the judges for the hall of the dancers, where he found his daughter, and, leading her to a place apart, sat by her and said, ¶ "My beautiful and dear daughter, thou must now answer me truly in the matter whereof I speak." ¶ When she asked him what he wished her to tell him, he said, ¶ "Tell me now, which of the knights whom thou hast seen in the three days' tournament finds most favor with thee, and in thy opinion has shown the greatest prowess." ¶ "Gracious lord and father," she replied, "I am not more favorably inclined to one than to another, and all are equally pleasing to me." ¶ "Surely thou hast looked with more pleasure on one than on the others?" persisted the king. ¶ "Dear father," said the princess, "seeing that thou wishest me to answer truly, I will be obedient, as is fitting: one is to me as others; where each has gallantly done his best, how can I declare a preference?" ¶ Again the king repeated his question in another form: ¶ "Should the award and the jewel be given to the Spanish knight, would it be pleasing to thee, or wouldst thou

rather see it bestowed on some powerful noble?" "My gracious king and father," his daughter answered with a smile, "it is always a fine and honorable action, when one decides between rich and poor with equal justice; but thou art wise, as prudent, and wilt do that which is fitting now, as always." "The king now perceived plainly enough that his child would not be grieved, or even displeased, if good fortune befell the chosen knight; therefore he ordered the jewel to be brought, as had been previously arranged, which was done, as the tale will tell. "First came many serving men bearing lighted torches, who cried aloud that every one should make room and stand back. Then came a knight of the royal house, in armor overlaid with a magnificent robe, who carried in his hand a long and heavy chain of gold richly garnished with precious stones; this he held aloft that all might see. Behind the knight came two fair young maidens, whose dresses were as splendid as that of the knight — maidens fair in face and form, so that they were a joy to all who looked on them. These maidens were attended by four knights richly clothed, and they all came and knelt before the king, in fitting homage, and asked if it was his will that the prize should be given; to which he gave his assent. Then knights and maidens, in formal state, passed around the hall until they came to the place where Oliver had modestly withdrawn among other of the guests. The armed knight called upon him to stand forth, for he was charged to speak with him. When he stepped forward, in some confusion, the knight thus addressed

him: "Most shining example of manhood and knightly prowess, the king, our most gracious master, and the nobles and ladies here assembled, who have been delighted by the great and knightly deeds of arms displayed in public in your most glorious acts, bestow upon you this chain, and give you therewith the praise and meed of championship, above all other knights, in the three days' tournament." "Then followed the presentation of the chain, the ends of which were held up by the maidens, while the knight supported the middle of it in his raised hand. After which the knight continued, "I am now to speak of our gracious lady, the princess Helena, in regard to whom the king gives you to know, that your claim to his daughter's hand, through the proclamation made in all lands, that she should be won by the most approved knight in the tournament, will be held to immovably. But he desires that you will wait while one year runs its course before you demand the fulfilment of this promise; and he pledges his kingly word that, during this time, his daughter shall remain unwed, and that both he and the princess will bear themselves toward you in such manner that you will be satisfied; for she is to be then given you in marriage, as she is now considered to be so betrothed. Moreover, the king wishes you to understand fully that, in this delay, he desires to take from you no good thing that you have deserved, and that should be yours; but, on the contrary, wishes to do you much honor." "With modest diffidence Oliver answered the knight, saying that he in no way deserved so

great reward as had been conferred upon him by the king and the judges, and by so much good opinion ; but he understood that it was awarded through the good will of the king, the princes, and the ladies of the court, and he would be very ungrateful who did not accept such kind good will joyfully. As to the request of a year's delay of the marriage, that request should be a command to him ; but he earnestly begged of the king that, if he had won the prize of the tournament, it should not be taken from him ; for it was his heart's desire to obtain at once the treasure he had won ; and no one must believe he thought lightly of that prize, because he yielded to the request that he should wait a year before claiming it ; which he only consented to do because such was the will and wish of the king. ¶ In grateful words he also thanked the king, princes, nobles, and ladies for the gift of the precious jewel ; and, laying the chain about his neck, gave his courteous thanks also to those who had brought it to him. ¶ Then he was asked what were his baptismal and family names ; to which he replied, ¶ " I am called Oliver, but may not, at this time, make known my family name." ¶ Then stood forth a herald, who by command of the king made proclamation of the victor of the tournament ; and as he could not call him by any full name, he cried in a loud voice, ¶ " This good knight, Oliver, this black, red, and white knight, the crown and perfect blossom of knight-hood, has acquitted himself with strength, skill, and manhood beyond all others, in the past three days' tilting and combats of sword and battle-axe : there-

fore the judges who were appointed, and have taken oaths to deal justly, give and ordain the honor and reward to him alone." ¶ Then was Oliver led before the king, to whom he did homage ; and he thanked him for the great honor which had been shewn him, of which he was not worthy, nor deserving. He begged that he would command him in all things, and believe him to be always the ready servant of his will. ¶ The king answered that he would do this with all his heart ; that he need have no doubt of having such position at the court as he desired ; that he would not forget him, and that what he had won in the tournament he should not lose. ¶ " Gracious king," replied Oliver, " I know that you mean me honor, and I shall rest confident in your promise that the full reward of my success in the tournament will be mine at the appointed time ; and since you give me choice of a place at your court, I beg you to give orders that I may be the carver for your daughter." ¶ The king answered that his daughter was not accustomed to be carved for by a knight ; that a nobleman of less distinction had filled that office, and that he desired to give him a much better position. But when he found that Oliver had set mind and heart upon the office which he asked for, the king consented that it should be as his daughter's knight desired. ¶ Then the king stood up, bade Oliver arise from his knees, took him by the hand, led him to his daughter, and bade her kiss her knight ; for he was of the opinion that he well deserved a kiss, and that the time had come for him to receive it ; at which Oliver was

well pleased. ¶ The beauteous Helena obeyed the will of her father, took Oliver by the hand, raised him from where he knelt before her, and kissed him. As their lips met a thrill passed through Oliver's heart, which opened to receive the impression of that moment, and closed again to hold it sacredly enshrined there until the hour of his death. ¶ He thanked her, and did her homage, again kneeling before her; but she bade him arise. Afterward there was dancing again, which continued a long time into the night. At length a sleeping cup of many wines and spices was brought in, and all sat down to the drinking of it. ¶ When the sleeping cup was finished, and they were about to separate for the night, the foreign princes and nobles took leave of the king and his daughter, and of the nobles and ladies of the land, saying that they would return home to their own countries in the morning; and they thanked the king for the honors shewn them at his court. ¶ The king begged them to remain with him still longer, but they would not consent; so, with many formal expressions of respect, they made their adieu. ¶ When the son of the king of Scotland took leave of the princess, he said to her that she was fortunate in her new knight, and he congratulated her that she had so accomplished a champion in her service. But Helena, who was no fool, very well understood that he spoke out of envy; and she made him no answer in reference to her knight; but took leave of him and of the other nobles who were in the hall, and retired to her chamber; after which all the guests departed from the court, and the festivities were at an

end. In the morning all the foreign guests rode forth from the city gates and returned, each into his own land. ¶ There were two kings of Ireland, who had ridden to the tournament together, because their kingdoms adjoined; and who had not been at the court with the other princes and nobles, although the king of Scotland had several times sent them messages, inviting them to come to him. These they had refused, and now rode away in great displeasure, and much angry feeling, meditating mischief. This was on account of the king of Ireland who was killed in the lists; for they deemed that the king of England thought too lightly of the loss they had suffered, the dead king having been a near friend to both. So they promised each other, if God helped them to come to their own land, they would again visit the king of England in such manner that he would regret too late the death of their friend, who had been slain in his English lists, and that he had treated their loss with so little concern.

Chapter x. How Oliver commenced his duties at the English Court; how he fell sick for love of the beautiful princess, and received a visit from her in his sick-chamber; and how this visit cured his illness.

Oliver bade good-night to the king and his daughter, also to the nobles and ladies of the palace; then rode again to his lodging, and with him went many knights and noblemen, who desired to give him attendance, and make themselves agreeable to him, foreseeing that he was to be a most important per-

sonage at the English court. When they reached his lodging he gave them



to drink, and thanked them for their trouble in coming with him, and said, "Dear friends, I will be a servant, and brother, and good comrade to you all; and wherein I can serve you, you will find me well inclined at all times." So they took leave of him and wished him a good-night, going each to his own home. Only one most agreeable nobleman he kept with him for the night. He desired his companionship in order that he might be made more particularly acquainted, in the morning, with the nobles and companions with whom he would associate at the court, and with whom he would be joined in the court service. After his eventful day Oliver slept through the night with better rest than he had enjoyed during several preceding nights. When a new day was come he and his comrade arose, and Oliver put on new clothes, that he had caused to be made during the night; and the nobleman brought him to the court, where, with the king and his attendant gentlemen, they heard mass. When this was over the king commanded that Oliver be taken to a cham-

berlain, a knight of the highest rank, to whom he had given his instructions. "Oliver, my good patron and friend," said the knight, "our gracious master, the king, has ordered that I shall receive from you the oath of obedience to him, and that you shall be named among the number of his highest chamberlains, with equipment of twenty horses and the necessary squires, pages, and servants, also generous emoluments suitable to such position. As to your wish to serve our gracious lady, you have the king's consent; but that office is held in much less rank than is now given you; however, you are at liberty to fill both places as you will." Oliver accepted the honorable position thus offered him with many thanks, and swore to serve the king faithfully; but his mind was much occupied with the thought that the time would now quickly come when, according to his heart's desire, he could satisfy himself with looking at the beautiful princess who had kissed him so amiably. He begged that the king would permit him to begin his service to her upon that day; which was granted, and he was brought to her chamber, where, when the table was set, came the beautiful Helena. Oliver wished her a good-day, and she thanked him with dignity; but in her heart she was very glad to see him. She sat at the table, and Oliver carved for her; ere long she raised her face and looked at him, and said, "Dear friend, it is your wish to serve and carve for me—you whom I have seen striking down armed knights, even a king, in the lists? Does it not seem a little office, after such great deeds, to be carving her food for a

young girl?" "Gracious lady," he answered, "it is my wish to do for you all that I know will be welcome and serviceable to you, and which you permit me to do; and I find greater pleasure in such service than I have ever found in the lists, and also esteem it a greater honor to me, than the accident of striking down a king." "My friend," replied the princess, "I thank you for your good will, which makes you so esteem my service; and, though I cannot but feel that you should not give me this work of your hands, still, as you wish to do it, it is my wish and a pleasure to me, to accept it." While Oliver carved he looked less at the morning meat than at the princess, but on this occasion no mischance happened thereby. When the table-cloth was removed he remained for a time with the ladies, then went to the king; to whom it had been already told how Oliver had served his daughter, and that she was pleased with him as a carver. As time passed Oliver was much liked at the English court, where all spoke well of him. The king could not praise him enough, and said often that his daughter's knight was a proper man, full of all virtues and honorable intents, and that he and his daughter were well cared for with such a servant. The princess appreciated the beauty and the virtues that adorned her young knight; but she sought to show it in no way, through fear that her feeling toward him should be too much noticed, and that she should be deemed unmaidenly; for she knew that the people of her court, or at least some among them, might be readier to put an ill

rather than a more kindly construction upon her conduct. When one asked, she said that she saw nothing in him that was not good and honorable, that he was an amiable person toward all, equally ready to do a good service for the lowest as for the highest. Although in the beginning he was hated by certain persons, who grudged him the favor and honors that he had won, still, through his sound wit, his goodness, and his amiability, he so won the hearts of his enemies, and so overcame their ill will, that they learned to love him; and, instead of a desire to injure, would have been ready to defend him. It were long to relate all the new sports and diversions that were introduced by him at the English court, so that there was now more pleasure in its every-day life than there was formerly upon a festival. The tale has told how Oliver received a kiss from the lady, to whose service he was dedicated; and it has told how he preserved the memory of it in his heart; but in a short time love took from him all the joy and pleasure of his life; and so held him in its meshes that he cared neither to eat, nor to drink, nor had any rest, either asleep or awake; for this cruel malady of love pursued and tormented him in many disturbing dreams. He was restless when not attending upon his lady, and in her presence he was distracted by painful doubts. Wherever he was, he seemed, as in a dream, to see the beautiful Helena before him; and he became infatuated so utterly, that what went on about him produced so slight impression upon his senses, that he lived in a world of fancies, and

no longer had diligent care in the things which he did ; for this history tells, that once, when he should have been carving at table, he was not conscious of his neglect of service ; but gazed at his



beautiful mistress, and breathed many deep sighs of love from the depths of his heart. ¶ The princess was aware that his attention was fixed upon her ; but as, in his dreamy abstraction, he laid nothing before her to eat, she said, ¶ “ Dear friend Oliver, I would eat if you would give me something.” ¶ He neither heard nor understood her words at first ; for his thoughts were not upon the food ; but when a very little sense came back to him, and he recollected himself and what he should be doing, he was red with shame, and began hastily to carve ; but, still as one whose mind was not properly upon his work, he cut himself, on one of his fingers, deeply to the bone. At this the princess cried out ; and poor Oliver, more bewildered than ever, was covered with confusion. At length he so far recovered his senses as to make his wound an excuse for leaving the table, requesting another to attend to his duties. ¶ The princess had observed with deep interest what had befallen her carver, and she

knew that his love for her had made his thoughts to wander ; so it chanced that an incident, droll in itself, left its mark upon her heart. ¶ Oliver returned to his lodging, and entered his chamber alone, where he threw himself upon a couch, in such condition of mind as may not be described ; but whoever had seen him might well have pitied him. He cursed his fortune, that he could not control his conduct under the dominion of this tyrannical love, that had so wounded him with its arrow that it had not only stricken down his courage, but had pierced his very heart. Now he must die ; for he expected no grace, pity, or relief from his malady. ¶ “ O king of England,” he cried, “ if thou hadst kept thy promise, as it is a duty of a king to do, I had not fallen into the great affliction in which I am now plunged ! Alas, this love, which I hoped would bring me the greatest joy, has proved the cause of my destruction !” ¶ Thus Oliver, in his despair, long lamented, until he became so weak that he could not arise from his bed. The king and all the court were much troubled by his illness, and orders were given that he should have the best of care, and be provided with everything suited to his needs ; and, in especial, the king commanded the court doctors to attend on Oliver as carefully as if he himself were the sick man ; and this was done. ¶ Of all who were distressed by Oliver’s illness, the sympathy of the princess was the deepest ; but she strove to hide it, that no one might remark upon it. She assumed a slight illness, that the principal court doctor might visit her daily, and of him she inquired con-

stantly about Oliver. When told that he was in a critical condition, she was grieved to the heart, and all the sorrow she had ever known seemed very little beside this misfortune. She went into her chamber, saying that she was ill, lay down, and bade them cover her, as she wished to rest alone. This she did that she might be the better able to hide her sorrow. When she was alone, she prayed: "Almighty and eternal God in heaven and on earth, who holdest in Thy hand all that are in the world, and guidest all according to Thy holy will, — and thou, gentle Pother and Queen in heaven and on earth, and who art an intercessor for all troubled hearts — I beg of ye and of our blessed Saviour, that ye will comfort my sad soul! O gracious Pother of God, why have I been given so much fatal beauty, that I am the cause of the death of the most charming and manly knight that my eyes have ever seen? I am not blessed, but cursed, by this destroying beauty; and I pray thee to protect my good and lovely knight, who has done me no injury, but always good, that I bring him not into dangerous illness and distress. Dear Pother of God, make known to me how I may help him; and I will do it, so far as I can, with absolute faith that thereby relief from his malady will come to him." When she had so prayed sleep weighed upon her eyelids; and in her sleep she heard the Pother of God speak to her, saying, "Helena, my son and I have heard thy prayer. The knight for whom thou hast petitioned is sick unto death; and therefore, as thou art the cause of his malady, thou must also be the cause of his re-

covery. Go to thy father, ask leave to see the sick knight, and when thou comest to him remind him that happiness awaits him when the year shall have speedily passed, and that thou wilt think so kindly of him, that, when the time comes, he will be well satisfied." The princess awoke, thanked God and his gracious Pother, arose and went to her father, and begged him to permit her to visit Oliver; this he granted. Taking with her a few attendants, she went to her knight's lodging, came into his chamber, and drew near the bed on which he lay; but he no longer recognized any one. With tearful eyes she cried out to him, "My friend, how is it with thee? I am grieved to the heart by thy illness." Oliver heard the voice of his dear lady, opened his eyes, and sighed deeply, but spoke not a word. Helena felt certain that he was not unconscious of her presence, so she went nearer to him, leaned her arms upon the bed, and spoke to him in a low voice: "My dearest friend, what is wrong with thee? Will thou leave me a widow? Knowest thou not that the year passes swiftly? Indeed, I am so grieved by thy illness that I have no comfort, save in prayer for thy recovery; which if I win not my whole heart will despair. I beg thee, my dearest friend, that thou wilt try to help thyself and follow the advice of those who seek to restore thy health; so mayest thou soon again be well. Meantime if there is anything that I can do for thee, tell me, and I will do it most gladly. I assure thee, on the honor of a princess and a maiden, that I know of none on earth to whom I would more gladly bring comfort than

to thee; for I know that this illness has befallen thee in my service, whereby I am more bound to thee than my words can tell." When Oliver heard the charming words of the princess and lady so dear to his heart, her loving kindness comforted him so much that a little strength returned to his enfeebled body, with which he thanked her for her goodness in visiting him in his illness; and he would have said to her that she was his life or his death; but he had heard from her dear lips, how she was ready to help him in any way she could, and so he would say nothing to distress her; and, besides, he was still so weak that he spoke with much difficulty. He only begged her, therefore, that she would give him some place in her thoughts during his absence from her service. And the princess answered him, "I will think that thou wilt come again soon to our court, for I know that all will gladly see thee again, and that every one desires thy return and thy recovery, and I most of all." When she had so spoken she took leave of him, and returned home; and afterward there was never a day that she did not send to inquire how he improved; and she sent him also the choicest dishes from the royal table, and whatever she thought might help to hasten his recovery. From day to day he became better; soon he could rise from his bed, and walk about his chamber; and he had ever the best of attendance. When he had heard the loving words that the princess had spoken, saw how she had come to visit him, and how she used the "thou" to him, as one who thought he was her husband in the sight of God, it was such healing medicine as

no doctor, however skilled, could have given; and it cured his malady, which was altogether mental, so that he was soon able to return to his place at the court. The king and his friends were glad to see him so restored to health, and were very kind to him; he began to serve his gracious lady as before, and to regain the flesh that he had lost, and soon became stronger and more beautiful than ever. When the princess knew that her knight had escaped, for this time, from the danger of death, and therefore her anxiety for his health, which had suffered so severely on her account, was removed, her manner cooled somewhat toward him; and she no longer by loving attentions allowed him to perceive that he was very dear to her. Oliver saw, with much regret, the change, and wondered, until his brain was bewildered, why it was that all the kind words from her, to which he had become accustomed, were suddenly lost to him. Although a wise and skilful knight and an accomplished courtier, this Spanish hero was still too young a man to have learned how fathomless is a woman's heart and disposition: indeed, not many at any age acquire such knowledge.

Chapter xi. How the kings of Ireland defied the king of England, and Oliver was sent with an army against them. — Of his victories and how he captured seven kings, and conquered Ireland.

Upon Whitsonide the king held a open court, and a great assemblage of his princes and nobles sat with him and the Princess Helena at their morning meal. To them a messenger

was brought in, who with great and threatening words thus spoke: ¶ “I



am sent hither by my most gracious masters, the seven kings of Ireland, whom God Almighty bless, and to whom he hath ordained that great honor, praise, and happiness be given. And my masters pray that same God that he will utterly destroy the kingdom of England, for it is not worthy to be any longer a kingdom. Now listen, thou tyrant, thou murderous king, to what I am commanded to say to thee from my most gracious masters, the kings of Ireland. They announce to thee by me that they will live and die thine enemies; they renounce thee and thine, body and goods, and will drive thee out of this kingdom as unworthy to occupy it. From Ireland came guests to thy court, having been invited hither, and expecting honorable and hospitable entertainment; but they found in thee only insolence and tyranny of which thou art full. And as in thy wicked wantonness thou hast caused a king of Ireland to be murdered and cut down without reason or offence, therefore thou art the cause that, at thy court, a great shedding of blood shall befall many Christian men who stand near thy throne. So look to thyself; my

masters say to thee through me that thine enemy is already in thy land with a great following; and thou art doomed to meet the end thou hast deserved.” ¶ When the messenger had ended the speech with which he had been charged by his masters, the king of England arose from the table in great wrath; his eyes were filled with fire, and he more resembled a madman than one in possession of his reason. He bade that the messenger be slain for his insolence. ¶ When the Irish herald, who had gloried in his message, beheld the king in such a state of excitement and anger, and heard his command that the insulting herald be slain, his heroic ecstasy somewhat abated, and he would that he had been more moderate in his words. Still no one molested him; for the king’s councillors gathered about him and sought to calm his rage, and every one present was startled and bewildered, while all, except a few around the king, were silent; for they knew not what to say. ¶ When Oliver found that the Irish herald’s defiance seemed to have terrified every one into an amazement which appeared to him to be uncalled for by the occasion, then knelt he before the king, and said very confidently, ¶ “My lord and king, I beg your grace that you will not be angry, nor take it amiss in me, so lately a stranger knight, that I offer to your grace my untried service. My gracious lord, all your court understands that you will not endure the insulting words which have been said to your grace by these foolish kings of Ireland and spoken by this most foolish herald. I know well, that so wise and powerful a monarch will rather suffer

death than fail to protect his honor and his people against such insults and defiance. That you will reckon well and promptly with these boastful enemies, who now insult you in your own land, and at your own court, I well know. Therefore I most earnestly beg your royal majesty, that you will give me the command of an army of such number as you think sufficient, and your council approves, that I may be your arm to punish these Irish kerns as they deserve. Although I have no claim to your confidence by any previous knowledge, on your part, of my ability to manage an army, still I assure you that I have had much training in the military art; and the great desire I have, to prove myself worthy the great place promised me in your court, leads me to hope that you will trust to me the war against this insolent and accursed foe that seeks to overthrow your throne and destroy your kingdom." "O my dear Oliver," replied the king, "I will consider that which you have wisely said; and your request, after due consultation, shall have a prompt and friendly answer." At the suggestion of his councillors, the king withdrew his order commanding the death of the herald, and gave direction that food be placed before him; then, resuming his place at table, the breakfast was finished. When he arose from the table and assembled his full council, who were agreed that a decisive and sharp answer be returned by the same herald that brought the defiance. He was sent for, and ordered to tell his masters to defend themselves; for the king of England would protect his land and people, and intended to sweep

the invading Irish scum into the sea. If they won his kingdom, perhaps they would let him be their court-fool; if the result was the reverse, they had certainly shown themselves well qualified to wear coronets. When the Irish herald, having to his great surprise received a considerable present, was sent back to his masters, who had, indeed, invaded England; and he gave to them the answer sent by the English king. After careful and very serious consideration by the king and his councillors, it was decided to grant Oliver's request; and he was told by the king that he was given this command on account of the great manhood that he had shown in the tournament, and of the confidence which he had inspired in them all by his wise and knightly conduct. For this confidence and the command thus given him, Oliver thanked the king and the councillors. Within three days ten thousand war-trained men were levied and placed under the control of the new general, who made oath of military service to the king, and was promised by him his full support. A military chest of five thousand nobles was also provided, to be used as needed, and to replace such losses as were liable to occur; and this money was found most useful and necessary in carrying on the war. When Oliver took leave of the king and court, and of his beloved and gracious lady, who commended him to the protection of God, praying that his divine guidance and shield be with and above him in every danger, and that he would bring him home to her safe and well. The army, which was well armed and excellently equipped, advanced so swiftly that in a

few days it came in sight of the enemy. When the Irish kings perceived that Oliver stayed not, but came forward to give them battle, they broke up their camp and took position on a wide heath that was near, where they awaited the attack of the English army. Oliver addressed his soldiers, and called on them to fight bravely in defence of their land against the invader who would drive them from their homes. They answered with a shout, and demanded to be led against the foe. As they drew near, they saw that the Irish army was much larger than their own, indeed four times as great; but its force was not wholly of trained soldiers as was the English; a large part being composed of hastily collected recruits, who were but poorly armed. When the two armies drew together, a great and indescribable cry arose from both parties, and in its tumult nothing could be heard but one dreadful roar. Then came the conflict, in which was such frightful hewing, cutting, and stabbing by both sides as cannot be described. In the great shock of meeting, horses fell in heaps, and the riders were trampled; or, escaping from the horses, fell to slaying one another on foot; and the hosts of the foot soldiers thrust and stabbed and smote with a destruction of life most pitiful to see. Oliver hewed his way, with great strokes of his mighty sword, into the midst of the Irish host where the throng was greatest, and struck about him with such knightly skill and prowess that he was the most conspicuous figure in the field. Soon every knight against whom he rode yielded before his strokes or fled in dismay, and wherever the sweep of his sword

reached, the earth was piled with dead; for his blows were so heavy and fatal that friends and foes were alike filled with amazement. He seemed inspired with an irresistible strength, and his voice sounded over the din of battle: "Are the kings of Ireland here? Let them come to me, and I will set upon their heads the sign of all the power England has to bestow upon them!" He was heard by a valiant king, who took a strong spear and charged upon the English champion. When Oliver saw him coming, he put up his sword, snatched a spear from the hand of an attendant knight, and spurred his horse against his opponent. They met with such force that horses and men fell to the earth; but the king never rose again. His adversary's spear had pierced his cuirass and buried itself in his heart. When there were desperate charges both by the English and Irish knights, striving to come to the aid of their leaders; and many were slain in that centre of combat. Oliver, now on foot, fought victoriously among his foes; always defending himself, he struck about him with unwearied strength, shouting his war-cry: "England! Down with the invaders!" So he cut a bloody path for himself and his companions, driving his foes before him, until he regained the solid ranks of the English, where he was again remounted. Still the battle waxed wilder and fiercer in a confused struggle, in which, with his own hands, Oliver overcame two Irish kings, who surrendered to him, and were led into the rear, in custody of English troopers. At length Oliver forced his way through the enemy's ranks, deep into

the heart of their host, where was displayed their principal banner. Striking off the head of him who carried it, he seized it as it fell. ¶ When the Irish host saw their standard in the hands of their enemies, they were dismayed; but a considerable number of their bravest knights threw themselves upon Oliver, in a wild effort to recover it. Although they fought with desperate valor until nearly all of them were slain, they could not rescue their banner. Then, struck with terror by the terrible deeds of this seemingly invulnerable band of English knights, and their entire host panic-stricken by the frightful slaughter of their bravest and their best, they lost hope and fled, in indescribable rout, closely pursued and still slaughtered by the English; nor did they stay their flight until they came to their ships. ¶ So many were slain in the flight that the dead lay thick along the way. On through the night they fled to their ships, and set sail in terrible fear that Oliver would follow them upon the sea, and that none would escape from the frightful death which he brought them. ¶ Thus demoralized, and many of them disarmed, the few who were still living returned into their own country, a meagre remnant of the boastful host that set out to conquer England; and they were received everywhere with lamentations, tears, and woeful cries by their countrymen. ¶ When Oliver came with his army upon the sea-shore, and found the Irish fleet in full sail homeward to their country, he turned back, and bade the recall be sounded, that every one should return to camp. This they did, and along

the road by which the Irish fled they found the dead so innumerable that the way was blocked by dead bodies, so that they were compelled to seek other paths back to their camp. ¶ Looking at this dreadful track of destruction, the English themselves were dismayed, and said one to another, ¶ "O God, it is the slaughter of the world that lies here on this fatal highway!" ¶ Oliver gazed with moist eyes on this work of his army, and cried, ¶ "Ah, my God and Creator! I beg Thee, in Thy limitless compassion, that Thou wilt forgive me, a poor sinner, that so terrible a shedding of blood has occurred on this day, of which I am in part guilty, and that it has happened to Christian men, and not to unbelievers." ¶ But still you may well believe that Oliver was joyful to have won the victory; and he returned thanks to God therefor, from the depths of his heart. ¶ So Oliver, with his army, came back to the city that had been besieged by the Irish host, in which he was now joyfully received by a procession of the citizens and all the priesthood. ¶ In this city they gave great gifts to Oliver because he had delivered them from sack by the enemy. These gifts he generously divided among his captains and common soldiers, keeping back nothing for himself. In the same manner was divided equally to the high and the low, all that had been won from the foe, and he would take nothing for himself. ¶ When this was concluded, and the booty had been divided, he called together all the captains who were under him, and said to them, ¶ "Companions and good friends, the Almighty has

helped us to win a great victory, to hold the field against our enemies, and to drive them to their ships. It seems to me that we should now send the story of this victory to our gracious lord, the king; and that we may do this it is needful that the dead be counted as closely as can be. Let this be done; it will be a sad numbering that we must pay for our victory." ¶ To this the captains were agreed; but it was afterward decided, that in order that the king might be immediately informed of the battle and victory in advance of such counting, to state the loss of the enemy to have been twenty thousand, and that, by the grace of God, only a few of the English had fallen. ¶ The letter was written; and, after approval by all the captains and men of war, was committed to a messenger, who was charged to ride



post-haste and deliver it to the king, who had remained in London. The messenger made great haste to that city, went at once to the king, and placed the letter in his hands. ¶ The king opened the letter and learned its contents first in private; but when he had read it, all may understand the joy of his heart. He gave the letter to one who read it aloud before

all those gathered at court, and every one gave thanks to God, the Almighty, for his help and grace in their hour of need. The king ordered that all the city bells should ring out the glad tidings, and that at night great bonfires should be lighted. Then he mounted his horse, and, with many nobles and princes, his daughter and her ladies, rode to the church of the holy Mary, and held a solemn service of praise for the deliverance of the kingdom from its enemies. ¶ Great praise and honor were given by all to the brave knight who had led the army to victory, and his name resounded through the streets from the throats of noisy thousands, declaring him the great champion of England, in whose hands their lives and liberties were safe. ¶ Now returns the tale to Oliver, who, when he had completed his letter, and still stood in the midst of his captains and nobles, questioned them if they were of the mind that the conquest of the Irish kings should be carried still farther. To this they answered, "Yes; and it shall not fail through us." ¶ Then Oliver spoke again to his army: ¶ "Gracious lords, good friends, and companions in arms, God Almighty has given us great good fortune, for which we cannot enough thank him; now it seems well to me, considering our good beginning, and that you promise that you will not fail me, that with the help of God we proceed with the good work of which our late victory is so favorable an augury. ¶ For you can well believe, that no people can be more panic-stricken than our foes, when they think of the great losses they have suffered, that they have lost three kings, one slain

in battle, and two our prisoners, and that of their trained soldiers in whom they trusted but a small remnant has returned to their land. Therefore it seems to me wise, considering these things, and also that we are not far from their land, that our army should push quickly forward, before they forget their defeat and losses, and before they have time to make such preparation as would give them any hope to resist us. We shall find them now completely disordered and unprepared, and none of their captains can quickly gather their scattered forces to oppose us. If we can win this country, my brave soldiers and gallant companions, you, through whom it will be done, will deserve that your deeds will be written in a chronicle that will never be forgotten, the chronicle of a valiant and warlike people. Our conquest of Ireland will also deliver our beloved England from any further danger of invasion by these rude foes, and make your homes, your wives, and children forever safe." ¶ When the leaders and the soldiers heard Oliver speak thus boldly and shrewdly, they admired him greatly, and were confident that his thoughts and words came from the great love and loyalty with which he regarded the English land and crown, and that he was a great captain, under whom they could not fail of all the success which he predicted. ¶ Therefore, after a brief and unanimous council, they gave him their answer, and said, ¶ "You are our captain; and we have been sent out to serve our lord and king against his enemies, and also to be obedient to you, as his chief general: therefore we say to you, to whatever

place you choose to lead us, we will follow, and stand by you to prosper or to die; and we will not forsake you except in death." ¶ Oliver saw and heard with joy the good will and confidence in him shewn by his captains and soldiers, and he knew that they were minded to be obedient; so he thanked them, and said that he would serve the king, the army, and England with body, mind, and heart, and all the skill of leadership which he possessed, and that he would always be faithful to them, ¶ When he called on God Almighty to prosper their invasion of the country of the Irish kings. ¶ So the advance of the army into Ireland was decided; and they took with them out of the city as many tents as they could find, and as many men as they needed to hew wood and do camp work. ¶ When they departed there went with them, in addition to their former force, a thousand knights and as many foot soldiers, all of whom had come to them upon report of their victory and intended invasion of Ireland, and would take no refusal of their service in the victorious army. ¶ They also took with them such artillery as the city could spare. ¶ Those who had been sent out to bury the dead reported that they had found four and twenty thousand of the enemy, and of Englishmen twelve hundred. For the loss of their brave companions the army was much grieved; but it is the common misfortune of war, and they had no time now amid the bustle of many preparations to spend in useless regrets. ¶ Sufficient ships were hastily gathered to the nearest port and fitted for the invading army, and soon the soldiers were embarked and the fleet

sailed out to sea. So quickly was this done,—for Oliver fully understood the importance of rapid blows,—that in a very short time the English army was landed on the Irish coast, and pushed forward into the land, destroying as they went the few cities and castles that were found which could harbor their enemies or disturb their movements. ¶ It was found that in Ireland the cities and castles were not so strongly built as in England or France, where a citadel can often hold out long after the city is taken. ¶ All places of strength were overcome as the army advanced; but such as yielded were allowed to march out their garrisons with all their possessions. ¶ So great was the fear inspired by the English army, that few dared oppose it, and cities and castles yielded as it advanced. ¶ The kings who had escaped from the battle in England were still so confused by their panic that they could make no fit plans, but seemed quite overwhelmed by their great losses. Therefore these Irish kings left the smaller cities and villages to the care of God, which meant their capture or destruction by the English, and returned to certain strong places, where they hoped to be able to maintain themselves until the power of their country was again gathered into a strength sufficient to defeat their invaders. ¶ Much, however, as they were terrified, there were certain among them who skirmished daily with the English, and fought so valiantly that many were slain on both sides. But the English won their way day by day, until at last most of the fortified places in the country had yielded; and the poorer people,

learning that they had no help or protection to expect from their lords, helped the English, in many cases, against their natural masters, finding it their interest to do so. ¶ At length the invading army came before a strong castle wherein was a king lately crowned in place of him who had been killed by Oliver at the tournament. This castle was at first attack so hard pressed that both sides had much loss; but those within defended themselves so valiantly, their walls remaining uninjured, that the first day's assault accomplished little. ¶ When King Macnamore, who had been overthrown by Oliver in the first day's tournament, learned that his cousin was beleaguered in his own castle, his amazement soon turned into fiery anger; and he swore by his kingly crown that the English invasion should be at once defeated and punished. He gathered together from far and near all the forces that he could collect, and with two other kings and their followers marched out to break up the siege and destroy the English army. King Macnamore intended to fall upon his enemy unexpectedly; but Oliver, who was very vigilant, and kept his spies out in all directions, learning that this enemy was advancing against him, went out to meet his attack with a considerable part of his army, leaving, however, a sufficient force to maintain the siege and guard against any sortie from the besieged. Finding a strong position, he so placed his army that the advancing forces of the Irish would be at much disadvantage. ¶ As the Irish king believed that Oliver was fully occupied with the siege, his army was widely

separated in its advance, and came on, in loose array, unprepared for immediate combat. So it happened that when King Macnamore's army came to the



place where the English lay in wait for them, he was surprised to find his soldiers in the midst of active enemies, who were so well placed and prepared that the Irish suffered great loss; but the battle was fiercely waged on both sides. On that day many a woman mourned her husband, many a child was made an orphan, and many a maiden lost her lover. Oliver held his army very valiantly against his foes, and fought with such deadly championship that few dared to await his strokes. But the Irish also fought bravely, for defeat meant to them loss of home and country. The battle lasted till night closed in, when, overpowered and thrown into utter confusion, the Irish host took to flight, no longer able to endure the slaughter inflicted upon it by the English. Night gave the chance of retreat, and, covered by its kindly darkness, the Irish availed themselves of the opportunity; but King Macnamore and the other kings who had come with him were all three taken prisoners. At this

capture Oliver was much pleased; for he had now taken five of the seven kings of Ireland, and of the two not yet captured one was in the beleaguered castle before which a part of his army still lay. When the fighting was over, and the living remnant of the Irish host had fled, the English army took its much needed rest upon the battlefield. Here Oliver caused his three captive kings to be as hospitably attended, with everything befitting their rank, as was possible in his camp after such a day of hard battle. Early in the morning the English marched back to once more assault the castle. The brave soldiers, whether knights or men at arms, though weary with so much fighting, were speedily ready, and, indeed, eager to set about their dangerous work. But they who lay in the castle defended it manfully; and the Irish king shouted aloud that he would sooner die fighting than fall into the hands of those who had murdered his father. The English lay long before this castle, during which time Oliver sent several messengers to the king of England, telling what was in progress, and desiring him to have no anxiety about his army, for all was going well with it. The English artillery was constantly discharged against the castle until it was much injured. When a great part of the encircling wall had been shot away, and a breach made into the castle itself, it was again valiantly stormed. Oliver, who led the storming party, was the first inside the castle; and when his men saw this they forced a way after him: in spite of all the resistance the besieged could make the castle was won,

and the king made a prisoner ; but before he was taken he defended himself so bravely and strongly that for a long time no one could lay hands on him ; and nearly all who were with him in the castle were slain. **O**liver garrisoned the castle well ; then advanced further toward a kingdom, where was a young king whose father had been killed in the first battle which had been fought in England. But the young king did not await his arrival ; he came to meet Oliver, riding without armor or weapons, and carrying in his hand a branch of an olive tree as a symbol of peace. When he met Oliver he paid him homage as his conqueror, and said,



“ **O** powerful conqueror, before whom no one is secure from the great fierceness of thy sword ; thou hast conquered kingdoms, and captured the kings of them all ; and I know that I in my single might can accomplish nothing against thee and thy power : therefore I surrender myself to thy will ; and I and my kingdom will, from this time forth, be submissive to thee and remain in thy service.” **O**liver thankfully received his submission, took him by the hand, and said to him, that he should

be treated with all generous consideration. **T**he tents were set up on a beautiful field that was freshly green and near at hand. Through it ran many pretty streams, for it was full of hot springs and very pleasant to the eye. **B**y Oliver’s command the six kings, who were held prisoners in a strong castle not far from that place, were brought hither ; and as fine a feast as could be made at that time and place was prepared for the army and their seven captive kings. **T**hese kings were brought to the camp, and Oliver received them kindly, and bade them to the feast that had been prepared, and at which they were most honorably and hospitably received. **F**irst the servants poured water over their hands ; after which ceremony the seven kings were seated together at one table, and Oliver and his captains near them at another table ; and all were well served. **W**hen the feasting was over, every one except the captains and the royal prisoners was commanded to leave the tent : then Oliver said to the kings, that they were prisoners to those who were in the service, and who did the will, of the king of England ; to which great king they had sent a shameful message, and wished to do him greater injury : therefore they must now live according to his will. **T**he prisoners were silent, greatly fearing that they would have harsh treatment, as, indeed, certain of them richly deserved. **T**hen Oliver told them that, upon the next morning, they would be sent to the king of England, and that they would do well to think over their position, and how they might make amends

to that great monarch for the insults and injury they had offered him. ¶ After Oliver had so addressed his prisoners, wine and spices for the sleeping cup were brought ; and when this was drunk every one went to his rest until the morning ; and the kings were well guarded through the night.

Chapter xii. How Oliver

and his army returned to London : of the festivities upon his return, and how he married the king's daughter.



In the morning the captains were busy commanding every one to make ready for the march, and the entire army began to make its journey back to London. ¶ When they came again to the shore of the sea, Oliver called to him a knight of great estate, who was one of his chief captains, and, with most kindly acknowledgment of his faithful and valuable help in the Irish war, so successfully brought to a victorious end, entrusted to him the honorable duty, to embark speedily in a swift ship, to convey in advance to the king the news that the army was on its way homeward, and to relate what had been accomplished ; for this could be better communicated by word of mouth than

it could be written. ¶ The knight, much pleased to be the messenger of so much good tidings, set sail at once, and came, as speedily as might be, to the king in London ; and, kneeling before him, delivered his message of respectful greeting from Oliver and all the captains and soldiers of the returning army. Then he proceeded to tell how all were on their way home to London ; how they had conquered seven kingdoms in Ireland, and subjected them to the English crown ; how Oliver was bringing the captive kings, and would deliver them into his master's hand to be dealt with according to his pleasure. He also related to the king the wonderful deeds that Oliver had done in the war ; such deeds as were scarcely to be believed of a mortal man ; but with his own eyes he had seen them done. And then he said to the king, ¶ " While thanks should be given to God for these great victories, after him the thanks of England are due to the valiant knight, Oliver ; for it is by his strong right arm, valiant heart, and wise leadership, that thy foes have been subdued ; and I believe that God has never given to any man more constant good fortune than to this brave knight." ¶ When the king heard the good news, he was so rejoiced that he sat for a time silent, because he could find no words that seemed to him sufficiently expressive, and he was overcome with the great good fortune which had come to him and to his kingdom ; but when he came to himself he embraced the knight who had brought the glorious tidings, and said to him, ¶ " My dearest friend, God's welcome to thee ! — From this hour thou art an

earl, for thy good tidings. But how can I enough honor thy great captain? I praise the Almighty, that he hath given to me and to England the arm and the brain and the heart of the noblest of knights, who has been our captain in this glorious war, and whose leadership will make this kingdom the most famous and powerful in the world.” ¶ Then he bade the knight again relate to him the whole story of the war, and called upon all in the palace to listen. So the new earl told it again from beginning to end, and constantly in his story he gave great praise to Oliver, and said, ¶ “The deeds which he has done are incredible to those who have not seen them, as I have; but soon there will be here thousands of witnesses, who will all tell the same tale.” ¶ Then the king sent men who had heard the story into public places in the city to give the good tidings to all the people. ¶ These stories soon came to the king’s fair daughter, whose heart was full of the gladdest rejoicing at all that was said of Oliver, and that she should soon see him; and she thought that if she were queen Oliver should be satisfied, and all England also, with the good gifts that she would heap upon him; for in her heart she was impatient of her father that her lover had not received his reward, the prize of the tournament, which he had then deserved, and which he had now earned over and over again by his great victories against the foes and invaders of England. ¶ The king asked on what day the army would arrive in London; and when he had been informed, he summoned his steward, and ordered that great preparation be made

for feasting the returning army, so that their home-coming should be made an occasion of joy for all; and he commanded that all England partake of that joy by two weeks of general festivity and rejoicing. He also sent to all his landed nobles, that they come to his court, and help him to do honor to those who had fought so valiantly against their enemies. ¶ When the victorious army approached the city of London, there went forth to meet it the king and a great company of lords; for there was no one at the court who was not ready and eager to welcome them, and to do honor to the great captain who led them. ¶ The king had commanded that Oliver and his captains be brought with great state into the city; therefore the streets were gaily decorated, and bonfires of rejoicing were lighted, while every bell in the city rang out a joyous peal, and all the priests came in procession to the gate to meet them. ¶ When Oliver saw the great company coming to meet him, he dismounted from his horse, and advanced on foot, and his captains did likewise. Then there were the warmest greetings interchanged, and many hasty questions asked and answered. ¶ Oliver and his followers were taken at once to the church, where they gave thanks to God for their safe return from the perils of war and of the sea. Having ended their devotions, they mounted again and rode to the palace; but Oliver sent the seven kings to the lodging that had been prepared for them. ¶ Clad in complete armor, at the head of his brave companions, Oliver rode through the streets of London amid universal rejoicing; and the ladies from their balconies

and windows threw down flowers and fluttered their scarfs and kerchiefs in sign of glad welcome. ¶ At the palace there was again a ceremony of reception. Oliver dismounted, and did reverence to the king, greeting him with modest dignity. The captains who were with Oliver also did reverence to the king, and were most kindly received by him, and to each was given some honor or title in recognition of his good service. ¶ When the king embraced Oliver with both arms, and kissed him with great affection, saying: ¶ "Dear knight and best friend, blessed be the father who begot thee, and the mother who bore thee and brought thee into the world; and praised be the Almighty, who has protected thee and brought thee to this kingdom, to which in this joyful hour so much glory and honor have come through thy great deeds. And I pray God that he make me worthy of thee, and that I may be able to reward thee fully." ¶ "To God should be thanks for our victories," replied Oliver,—"to God, and to your own valiant people, of whom you made me the leader,—and not to me; and though I have done the best that I was able to do, I have not deserved the honors which you bestow upon me." ¶ The king replied that he was well informed of the things which had happened, and of which there was much more to be said and done; but he now bade Oliver go to his lodgings, lay off his armor, and come to the court festival, which had been commanded in his honor, bringing with him the Irish kings, to be also partakers of the festival, and to do honor to the victorious general who had conquered them.

¶ But Oliver asked permission of the king that before laying off his armor he be allowed to pay his respects to his gracious lady, the Princess Helena. To this the king joyfully consented, and Oliver was taken to the apartments of the princess, to whom the king had sent a message, that she should receive her knight kindly, and show him all the favor that she could. ¶ When he came before the princess, she took him by the hand, bidding him welcome in God's name, drew him to her, and kissed him; but their meeting must needs be brief, and Oliver was hurried from her and her ladies, who offered him every kindness and welcome, that he might not delay the grand ceremonial of the festivity which was now ready. ¶ So he went to his lodgings, put off his armor, and was dressed for the festival in magnificent court robes, which had been prepared for him by the king's commands. ¶ When Oliver and the seven kings, for whom, likewise, court dresses suitable to their state had been provided, were in readiness to proceed to the court, there came to his lodgings a great number of the nobles and knights of highest rank, sent by the king to conduct him and his captains and the kings to the palace. This was a fine spectacle, for all bled with each other in the splendor of their dresses and equipages, to do honor to the great hero of the occasion. ¶ Oliver had spoken to the Irish kings of the king's intention toward them, and had told them how he believed that their past offences would be forgiven them, upon their promise of good service and obedience in the future; so they were partly reassured as they rode forward, and their fine horses and

rich dresses seemed to them a good augury of a kind reception by the English king. They were met by another company of English lords, and led before the king, who did not rise from his seat to receive them. So they knelt before him, much troubled in spite of the encouragement they had received. ¶ When the king perceived their distress, he made them welcome, and bade Oliver present each one of them severally to him ; who, when thus introduced, offered his homage and submission, which were received graciously by the king, who talked with them of many matters, saying nothing in regard to the past war ; and this talk lasted until announcement was made that all should proceed to the hall of feasting. Then there was the ceremony of the washing of hands. ¶ The king had ordered three tables to be placed higher than the others in the hall. At the highest he sat with his daughter, and Oliver was invited to take his seat at the king's right hand ; this honor he modestly accepted, very happy in his heart, for such distinguished position showed that he was now considered of the royal family. No other but these three sat at this table. ¶ Then the king commanded that the seven captive kings be placed at the second table, not quite so high as that of the king ; which was soon done ; for all had been arranged beforehand, and the court master knew what he had to do. The captains of the army and highest nobles and ladies were then placed at the third table, which was very great, for these were many. At this table the captains had the most honorable places. Then, through the vast hall, the great multitude of guests of lower degree

were placed by the court master and his assistants, each guest according to his rank. ¶ The food was plentiful, with an abundance of rare and rich dishes, many of them elaborately decorated ; and the wines were of the choicest that could be procured. It was a magnificent feast ; and the joyous faces and splendid dresses made it the grandest spectacle that any of the feasters had ever seen. ¶ When the feast was ended, and the tables had been removed, and thanks had been returned to God, the king commanded Oliver, that he should present the Irish kings and his captains to the princess, and then lead her



into the dance. This was done with much court ceremonial, in which her young and handsome knight showed himself to his princess to be as accomplished a master of court etiquette as of military skill in war ; and a murmur of admiration was heard throughout that great company, that their hero was as pre-eminent in the court and ball-room as in the tournament and battlefield. ¶ The king was well pleased ; and while he looked at Oliver, dancing with the most courtly grace, he considered within himself how it would be possi-

ble to best reward him for the great service done to him and to the country. But he could think of no greater reward for all the brilliant services Oliver had performed, than his daughter Helena, whom this valiant champion had previously won by knightly deeds, whom he, with what now seemed an excess of prudence, had kept back from him; so now the thought came to the king, that it was possible that Oliver no longer wished for the princess, who had been denied him; and this thought disturbed him greatly. So he resolved that after the dance he would speak to Oliver of his deferred marriage in the presence of that great assembly, and propose its immediate solemnization. ¶ Therefore, when the dance was ended, and his daughter came to him to wish him good-night, her father said to her that he wished her to wait in her chamber, and not at once lie down to sleep, as he might wish to speak with her again. ¶ In the presence of the seven kings and other princes and nobles, the king thus addressed Oliver: ¶ "Oliver, my good knight and dear friend, I thus publicly confess my fault, that I have for a long time delayed the fulfilment of a promise to thee, and have not given thee that which should be thine, my daughter, won by thy valiant and knightly deeds in the tournament, to the victor of which she was promised. When I made the request for delay I was moved by the thought that I knew nothing of thy character or family, nor had I, or any of my court, knowledge of thee, save of thy appearance and exploits in the lists. But now we know thee well, and were my daughter queen of the entire world I know of no hus-

band for her that I would prefer to thee, despite the fact that thou still concealest from us thy family and history. Therefore, praiseworthy knight, who art the honor, the protector, and the enlarger of this kingdom, I confess that it is not in my power to sufficiently repay thee for the great service that thou hast done for me and for my realm, in any other way than by giving to thee the most precious treasure that I have in my kingdom of England, which is my dearest daughter, if it is thy wish to take her in holy marriage. So wilt thou, after my death, possess this noble kingdom; and I can rest satisfied that I leave a well-guarded realm under the rule of a king so powerful and just as thou hast proven thyself to be." ¶ The king ceased to speak, and looked at Oliver for his answer. That valiant knight, however, though never vanquished in battle, was now so overcome by his emotion at hearing of the great recompense thus offered him, and by all the honor and praise so generously bestowed, that his heart was too full for utterance; nor could he, for a little time, find fitting words with which to accept his priceless reward. At length the power of speech came to him, and falling upon his knees before the king, he thus answered him: ¶ "Most mighty lord and king, I have learned, through your too kind appreciation of my poor efforts, that there is no better service, nor hope of higher reward, than in serving so great and generous a king. I may well say this when that which I have been able to do is so richly repaid; when I am rewarded with a gift greater than any prince on earth may receive. I give thanks to God, the Al-

mighty, and to his dear Mother, and also to your royal grace; for no poor man such as I am had ever before one tenth part of the good fortune with which you so generously honor me; and I pray God, that he make me worthy of your generosity. Through you a name will be mine, which will replace my family name; for I shall henceforth be called, by those who speak of me, the Fortunate Knight." ¶ When the king bade Oliver arise and stand beside him while he sent for his daughter. When she came he took her by the hand, led her to Oliver, and said, ¶ "Dear son, this is my daughter, whom I give to thee as thy wife; and thus gladly I fulfil my promises." ¶ Oliver sought to thank him again, but found no fitting words: his joy was too great. ¶ The princess was startled by the suddenness of this bestowal of her on the Fortunate Knight,



and blushed rosy red; but her beauty was not lessened thereby. ¶ When the king saw her confusion he said, with kind good humor, ¶ "Ah, my dear daughter, it seems that I have disturbed thee sorely, by giving thee a husband without thy knowledge and consent; but I trust that he will know how to reconcile thee to the affliction, for it was needful

that our debt be paid." ¶ There was an archbishop at the court, who performed the ceremony of betrothal at once. When this was done, an old knight began to speak, by command of the king; and he turned his face toward the seven captive kings, and said to them, that the high and mighty king of England, his most gracious master, had commanded him to say to them, that, in consideration of the great marriage and festival, which would be on the morrow, and on Oliver's account, who had interceded in their favor, the king was kindly minded toward them; that he would give them back their kingdoms, and permit them to return to their homes; but this upon the conditions: that they should swear fealty to him, receive from him their fiefs as from their sovereign lord, and, also, so often and so much as he claimed from them they should yield, whether it might be their aid against his enemies, or to come when required to his court, and that they should be always obedient to him, and acknowledge him for their sovereign lord. ¶ The kings, though they were not pleased to have a master imposed upon them, yet hoped that a time might come when, by cunning or force, they could regain what was now lost to them; so they all agreed, and received their lands from the English crown, and swore allegiance to the king of England as their feudal lord. ¶ After the kings were thus sworn, the dance was resumed to celebrate the betrothal; but it continued only a short time. When the sleeping cup was brought in, and given to all the guests, after which they departed from the palace, and this great day of festivity was at an end.

¶ But Oliver's heart was so full that he could not sleep : joy and expectation conjoined to banish the drowsy god from his pillow ; and so, as he tossed most restlessly on his bed in vain attempt to sleep, the slow hours passed, and at length the rosy light of morning kindled in the east, and the world awoke again to the doings of a new day. ¶ Now on this morning of the royal marriage the king bethought him that his new son had been given no time for the making of wedding garments, so he sent to him rich and costly suits, embroidered with gold and set with pearls, that he might choose from among them that which it pleased him to wear. ¶ When Oliver was arrayed and ready there came a great company of knights and nobles and five of the Irish kings to bring him from his lodgings ; and the other two kings remained as an escort for the princess. ¶ So Oliver arrived at the court with many great princes and nobles, and the king, greatly attended, came forth to meet him with many loving greetings ; and they went at once to the portal of the church, where they awaited the arrival of the princess, who soon came, crowned and clothed magnificently, as was fitting to the daughter of a great king ; and before and after her went a great number of ladies and young maidens, strewing flowers along her way, who were to be her attendants in the church ; and on either side of her was a king of Ireland. But the princess, though attended with great state to the place where Oliver awaited her, came meek and silent and most modest in her manner. ¶ Then there was loud sounding of music, and blowing of trumpets,

and waving of banners, while a great concourse of people were assembled to see their princess go into the church. ¶ Court pages made place, that the king, princess, Oliver, and their attendants might enter ; when all these were in the church, the marriage service was speedily said. The archbishop performed mass, and then, when all the religious service was ended, they went home to the palace, and assembled at the wedding breakfast. ¶ How can it be told how gay were the wedding dresses, how fair the faces of the ladies, how gallant the bearing of the nobles and knights, and how happy and joyous they all were ? ¶ The young nobles, the knights, and the captains were all of one mind in demanding that a tourney be held at once ;



for which every one who had pleasure in tilting should make ready ; and soon thirty-two knights were in the lists, sixteen arrayed against sixteen ; and their plumes and pennons dancing in the sunlight were most charming to see. ¶ Oliver did not tilt ; he preferred to dance and entertain the ladies and young maidens ; and whomsoever he selected for the dance thought herself greatly honored thereby. But when the tilting be-

gan Oliver put on his armor, mounted a fine horse which bounded beneath him, and on which he sat with the grace of an accomplished horseman, and served on the field to the two kings of Ireland who had escorted the princess, and who now tilted in her honor. These kings were gallant knights, receiving much applause, and winning the prizes that were awarded to the champions of the field. ¶ After the tourney every one withdrew to his lodgings, and arrayed himself in gayest apparel to appear again in the evening when all gathered together for a grand dinner, to which the ladies came in new and beautiful robes, other than those they had worn in the morning. ¶ When all were assembled, the king ordered that the trumpets be blown, and that water should be poured over the hands of all. When this was done, all sat down to the feast, which was most royally served; for such a magnificent wedding had never before been seen in the kingdom. ¶ When the repast was ended, there was dancing, in which Oliver took his fair bride by the hand and led the dance. So graceful and charming were both that it was a joy to all that numerous court to see them; and it passed from one to another, that so beautiful a couple as Oliver and the princess had never been seen before in this, or in any, land. ¶ When dancing had long continued, the bride was taken away by a party of ladies, and the dance came to an end. Then a sleeping cup of rarest wines and spices was brought in; and the ladies, nobles, and knights sat again at the tables, and they would have had Oliver sit with them; but he would not; for he thought that the fes-

tivity had been continued long enough. ¶ He retired to a chamber that was near that of the princess, and put off his court robes. Here he remained until he thought the proper time had come, when he went to the bride's room, and found that they had there set a table with food and drink upon it; but he overturned the table and everything upon it, then he hunted the ladies who still lingered out of the room, and he closed the door and made it fast. This he did knowing that otherwise certain of the young nobles and their wives would insist on coming in to drink there a final sleeping cup.

Chapter xiii. How Oli-

ver prospered until he went out to hunt a wild boar, when he fell into an ambuscade of his enemy, was made prisoner, and cast into a dungeon in a castle of Ireland; and how the king, the Princess Helena, and all England mourned for his loss.



¶ When the king heard that Oliver had overturned the table in his chamber he laughed, and said that he had done well, for that now no one would attempt to go into the room, knowing that there was nothing there

to eat or drink. ¶ Early in the morning the king arose, and after he had eaten his breakfast he went to Oliver's chamber door and knocked upon it, crying out, "Arise, ye loiterers: it is day; arise!" ¶ When Oliver heard the voice of the king he arose, and went in his nightgown to the door, and opened it. The king came in alone, and going to the bed where his daughter lay, wished her good-morning. Then he asked her how it fared with her, but she would not answer him, whereat he said: ¶ "My daughter, be not wroth with thy father, that he comes to wish thee joy of thy new life and to be the first of all to greet our Oliver, who is henceforth my beloved son." ¶ Then after some conversation with Oliver, — for the princess still refused to utter a word or let him see her face, — the king and his son left the chamber and the ladies of her household came in to the princess and assisted her to dress. When this was done she went with her husband to the church to attend mass; from which all proceeded to the palace and a numerous company sat down to the table for the mid-day meal, which was profusely and luxuriously served. After the meal there was dancing and other diversions that lasted until the hour of vesper. ¶ The celebration of the marriage and of the Irish conquest, joint causes for rejoicing, was continued during two weeks; at the palace was open hospitality, and every one ate and drank there. But after the fourteenth day the princes, nobles, and ladies, who were the court guests, took leave and returned to their homes, and the king was left to hold his usual court, which

was still a great assemblage of people. ¶ Oliver was now established in a high and honorable position at the court of England, as was fitting for the king's son and future ruler of the kingdom, which all now acknowledged him to be; and he retained about him many young knights and noblemen, who, with the princess's retinue of young and high-born ladies, formed the special court of the newly married pair. ¶ The Irish kings took leave of the king of England, and also of Oliver, promising to serve the king in what way or at what hour he should ask it of them; and they likewise proffered service to Oliver, whose favor and good opinion they much desired to retain, for they knew that since their capture he had sought to exercise a friendly influence with the king for their benefit, and had constantly treated them with generous consideration. ¶ And God was so gracious to Oliver that he had the good will of all the people of England, who thought, and freely said that he had been sent from heaven to be the champion and savior of the nation. ¶ Whenever any dissatisfaction existed among the nobles at the court, or anywhere in the land, he labored to bring about better feeling, and to have complete justice done to all; for he had always great influence with the king, which he exercised most beneficently for all the king's subjects, and this was so well known that he was looked upon as a kind patron, as well as a powerful protector. He gave generously of his means to enrich poor knights who sought his aid; he protected the widow and the orphan; and instead of seeking to increase

his own wealth, he gave help to all who were in distress or want. In short, he was full of all the virtues that a man may possess. Thus he won all hearts, and it was often declared that the king had shewn the utmost wisdom and wit in that he had so soon recognized the value and the virtue of this his new son. And so in peace and content the king lived at his court, and had great fame and honor in all lands, and every one, whether great or small, feared his power so much that they dared do him or his kingdom no injury; and he was lord and master over all who were his neighbors. The beautiful and amiable Princess Helena was not less endowed with virtues than her husband, though, being of a less energetic nature, her good influence was not so widely known. When the months had run their course and her time was come, she bore a beautiful son, who gave great joy to the king and to all the people of the realm; and he was christened Henry. This prince was destined to be greatly esteemed and loved when he grew up, for he became one of the manliest knights ever known. Still, he was never king of England, for he died young, a great loss to the kingdom. The chronicles tell that he served Christianity by avenging upon the infidels the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. As time went on, a lovely daughter named Clara was born to Oliver and Helena, who had great joy in their children, and praised God daily that he had so blessed them. Their mother often held the children in her arms, and could not satisfy herself with gazing at, admiring, and loving them, and they were also very dear to

the king, who took much joy in them. Thus they lived, most happy in their home, with a delightful court, and the kingdom at peace and prosperous; but all happiness has its limits, as God in his providence ordains. One day the hunters brought in report of a monstrous wild boar which they had seen in the forest, not far from London. Oliver, who dearly loved the chase, was overjoyed at this, and quickly determined to ride forth to hunt him. Two days later he rode out of the city, and came near the place where the boar had been seen. A village near by was the appointed place of meeting for the huntsmen. But in the night before the hunting Helena had a frightful dream, in which she thought that she was with Oliver at the hunt, when there came running toward them a great wolf that seized Oliver with teeth and claws and tore him in pieces, so that she lost her husband and was distracted in her wild distress. From this dire dream the princess awoke in terror, trembling in all her limbs, and could not sleep again; nor would her fright pass away, for the image of the dreadful beast kept returning to her mind, and would not be banished until daylight lessened the power of the dream. Then when it was morning she hastened to tell all this to Oliver, begging that he would not hunt on that day, for her mind misgave her on account of her dream. Oliver laughed at his wife's story, deeming dreams but fancies, and he assured her that she should see good and not evil come out of it, for he would bring her a more monstrous beast, if the huntsmen's tale were true, than the one that had

frightened her, and she should eat of it and find it good. ¶ When the dogs were let loose, he rode with the hunters into the wood and followed the hounds. The boar was quickly started, and ran before them. Oliver, better mounted than the others, rode so swiftly that he was soon separated from the other hunters, and pursued the chase alone. ¶ Had he known the great mischance awaiting him, he would have been more guarded, nor ridden so far without companions. But why should he dread mischance in a sport which he had often pursued in that forest? He had no reason to fear it, as he rode after the game, taking heed neither of footpath nor of highway, nor whither they led. ¶ Alas, great king of England, long time shall pass during which thou shalt not see thy son and faithful servant! And thou, Helena, wilt mourn long for thy husband, and suffer great sorrow! ¶ When Oliver became aware that no one followed him, he had already ridden for a long time, and was far from his friends. Finding himself alone, he blew upon his hunter's horn, but no one answered. He kept on, however, and the further he went the more was he separated from his companions. ¶ Now the wild boar, in terrified flight, had rushed through a party who were travelling to London, overturning one of these in its mad career. This party was an Irish king and his attendants — that king whose father Oliver had slain with his axe at the tournament. When he saw the boar and pursuing hounds, he was sure the hunters would soon appear; and he thought him that one of them might be the Prince Oliver; for he believed

the dogs to be a royal pack, and the chase was near London. Then came into his mind a sudden plan by which, if he could come upon Oliver separated from his huntsmen, he might wreak upon him vengeance for the death of his father, which he had long meditated. Therefore he stood still with his people and waited. ¶ Oliver, riding toward them and suspecting no mischief, was glad to find people who could direct him; for he had now lost track of the hounds. As he came near he recognized the king, and greeted him; but his former captive, who had in return for kind clemency promised him faithful service, would now give him no answer except an angry scowl; and he cried to his servants, ¶ "See, here is the murderer who killed my father, stormed my castle, and through whom my house has suffered the greatest dishonor that ever fell upon it! Now stand by me; for I may never have a better chance to reckon with my enemy than at this hour." ¶ Oliver heard the words, though they were not addressed to him, and, finding himself in deadly peril, drew his sword and defended himself in knightly fashion; but this did not long avail him. He was not fully furnished for battle against fully armed and numerous foes; so at last, after his hunting sword was broken, he was disarmed and taken prisoner. Then he was securely bound, and the king let pull a monk's hood backside before over his face so that he could neither see nor be recognized. Thus muffled, he was brought to a seaport, put into a ship, and conveyed to a strong castle in Ireland that belonged to this king, where he was thrown into a hot-

rible dungeon, wet, filthy, and filled with vermin. Nothing but bread and water was given him with which to prolong his life until the Irish king should arrive from England, when he would take such further measures as pleased him. ¶ That his treason might not be suspected, he did not return home immediately, but continued his journey to the king of England in London, whom he found in much grief because he could not learn what had become of Oliver, who was sought for everywhere with the most diligent search that it was possible to make. At the palace, when at length it became fully understood that Oliver had utterly disappeared, and could nowhere be found, there was the most pitiful lamentation and grief that had ever been known. Indeed there was never greater sorrow in England. ¶ "O, unfortunate kingdom!" cried the unhappy king, "thou hast lost the brightest jewel of thy crown, and thy strongest bulwark of defence! Ah, my dearest son, who hast been so strong a protector of this realm that I could lie down and sleep free from all anxieties because I had thee by me and no enemy dared lift a hand against the kingdom or its king; but henceforth I shall be lightly valued, and no longer claim obedience as when thou, my dearest son, stood at my right hand!" ¶ But the sorrow of the king was not to be compared with that of the princess; for his was more a sorrow of the mind, while hers was of the heart. She could neither eat nor drink, but lay on her bed like one dying, and all who saw her had deep pity. She was indeed a sad sight, lying thus wretched and nearly lifeless, taking no heed

of what went on about her, or, when brought to herself, crying out with agonized voice, ¶ "Ah, my God, why hast Thou given me him whose taking away leaves me in the greatest grief and affliction of any unhappy woman upon this earth? O, why is it not Thy will that we may still be together? Then could I praise and bless Thee!" ¶ "O mild and gracious Mother of God," she would cry again, "how have I offended thee that thou hast taken from me my dearly loved lord and husband who loved me so entirely?" ¶ These and other lamentations of this good princess moved by the deepest grief brought tears from the eyes of all her attendants, who also mourned with her; but none could give her comfort. ¶ The tale here leaves to tell of the king of England, his daughter, and all the people of that country in their grief, and returns to the kingdom of Castile and to Arthur, who is now king of Algarbia and regent of Castile, and tells certain things which happened to this friend and companion of Oliver's youth.

Chapter xiv. How King

Arthur was warned that his dear friend needed help: how he left his country, and wandered for three years in foreign lands: his adventures in Ireland, and how he met the White Knight.

The tale has told how Oliver departed from his father's land of Castile, and of the great sorrow and distress of the king because he knew not what had become of him. In this affliction he remained until the end of his life; for in a short time he died of grief, living not long after he was parted from

Oliver. Arthur, king of Algarbia and Oliver's comrade, was chosen by the



Castilian princes to be regent after the king's death until the time when Oliver should return to his country. As the kingdom of Castile was larger and more powerful than that of Algarbia, Arthur spent most of his time in Castile, for Algarbia was a very small kingdom; nor did he have so brilliant a court there nor so intimate acquaintance as in Castile, where most of his life had been passed. So in high station and much love and honor, the time went pleasantly and royally with him, but he did not forget his friend and sworn comrade. Every day he looked at the glass that Oliver had left him, and when this had continued a long time he saw one day that the water had changed, according to the words of his friend's letter—that is the water had become black as ink. When Arthur saw this, he exclaimed, with tearful eyes, “O, my dear and faithful comrade, I see that some great misfortune hath befallen thee, either to thy body or thy possessions, which is a heart-sorrow to me! One never so needs a friend as when in trouble. Now must I show myself a true friend to thee—and I will do so.

I swear to God, the Almighty, by my truth and the crown I wear that entirely alone as thou didst depart out of this kingdom will I also go forth; and so long as God giveth me strength, pursue my quest, nor turn aside from it until I know whether thou art dead or living; and if I find thee in peril I will surely bring thee help or share thy danger with thee.” When he wiped his eyes and went out of the chamber, and coming into the hall he gave orders that letters be written calling his councillors and all the princes of the land to come to him. When they were met together he showed to them reasons why it was not possible for him to govern both the kingdoms with which he was charged. Therefore it was his wish that they should appoint a prince in his stead to be regent and guardian over the kingdom, for he desired to go again into his father's land, declaring that his duty called him. Algarbia was his heritage from his father, and the land of his birth. Therefore he wished to know of them whether he should choose, according to his judgment, an honorable prince whom he thought able and trustworthy as regent of Castile, or if they wished to advise him in the choice. “Poble king of Algarbia,” they answered, “we have not held or considered you as regent, but as our lord and king until such time as our rightful prince, King Oliver, comes home to his own. This you should well understand, for we have never been found disobedient to you, and there is no one of us who will not gladly serve you as his king and master. It is now your wish to go from us, which we greatly regret; but since

you will no longer remain and it may not be otherwise than that you leave us, and we have no power to hold you, you may choose from among us one who is pleasing to you, and whom you think good and trustworthy, to govern in your place; but no one will be so dear to us as you if we might longer keep you with us." Arthur thanked them for the love, honor, and service which they had for so long a time given him; then he appointed a prince of an honorable house who was very pleasing to them all to be regent and guardian of the kingdom: after which he took leave of them with moist eyes; for he had many dear friends at the Castilian court, from whom it was painful to separate, and his heart was also wrung with fears, of which he had received mysterious warning that evil days and misfortune had come to the absent king of Castile, his dear and sworn friend to whom he had vowed his life. When he departed from Castile, and many nobles accompanied him for several days' journey until he insisted upon parting, bade them adieu, and would not permit them to ride further with him. When he came with his servants into his kingdom he was well received, but remained only a short time, for he at once appointed a governor to the command of the kingdom and gave orders that all who owed obedience to him should be equally obedient to the governor whom he had set over them. He announced publicly that he was to make a journey which he had promised to make alone, that it was not to a great distance, and that he would soon return to them, if God gave him health and so permitted. When he had so spoken they

believed him and were content. After which, in the early morning, he rode away alone, for he had vowed to have no companionship in his quest, feeling that it was a part of his friendship to go forth in the same manner as his friend had departed from his native land, but God, the Almighty, was with him, and he had need of his aid as the tale shall tell. Filled with such intentions of devoted friendship, and resolves to rescue his brother at whatever peril to himself, Arthur departed from his kingdom, and began diligently to inquire for his comrade, as one who would never cease until he had obtained tidings of him. In Portugal, the first kingdom to which he came, he found no trace of his beloved friend. Afterward he sought throughout all the lands of Spain; and then he passed to France, where he wandered for a long time, finding himself at length in a city called Calais. Here he met people who were about to journey to England, and he embarked with them, sailing out over the sea. In all these wanderings and searchings through the great countries that have been named, much time had been spent, and Arthur governed his impatience as wisely as he could. Meanwhile Oliver lay in prison, with only bread and water for his food, and subjected to the harshest and most brutal treatment. He expected no release, but rather each day to be murdered; for this ending he began to long with all his heart, that so he might escape the suffering that he endured daily, in his dismal dungeon. After Arthur had embarked on the sea a great storm arose, and drove the ship out of the course which it should have

taken. At length, after great trouble and labor, they came in sight of land which the sailors at first knew not, but when they came nearer and could better see the shore they found that it was a part of Ireland that was far distant from England. ¶ Having been told that this was Ireland, Arthur begged the captain to set him on shore, for he thought that he might perhaps learn something of Oliver there, since there had been no tidings of him elsewhere, and he had determined to search all lands for his dear friend. ¶ When he was put upon the shore he knew not whither to go, and he prayed God that he would set him upon the right road, where he might hear of his comrade and brother. ¶ He was nearly two months in this country, and when, in all this time, he wished to ask questions he could but make sign, for otherwise they could not understand him, and he had neither horse nor other animal on which to ride, but must wander afoot. ¶ One day he came to a dark wood in which were many dark animals that were prowling about seeking what they might devour. The people attempted by signs to warn him not to go into this forest, but he could not understand their words or signs, so he went onward a whole day's travel, but saw neither house, hut, people, nor cultivated land, and when night closed in he was so overcome by weariness that he was compelled to lie down among the trees and sleep. So weary was he that in spite of his lack of shelter he slept heavily, and in the morning went again upon his way; but he had nothing to eat. ¶ While he was thus deep in the forest a great beast came

upon him, a fierce lion that for a long time had found nothing to eat, and now was furious with hunger. When Arthur saw that the lion would attack him he prepared to defend himself, for he had on a suit of mail hidden beneath his dress, and had a good sword. He took off his mantle, wound it around his arms as a protection against the animal's claws, drew his sword from its sheath, commended himself to God and his dear Mother, and advanced against the lion, which showed no fear but sprang upon him, and struck him with its claws, rending away his clothing, and with one fierce stroke of its mighty claw tore away more than an hundred rings out of his corselet. The force of this assault threw Arthur upon the ground, but he sprang again to his feet, ran in upon the lion, and struck so manfully with his sharp sword that the struggle was hard and fierce. ¶ When the lion would have again struck him with its great paw, Arthur with a swift stroke hewed off the huge foot so that it fell upon the earth. At this blow and dreadful wound the lion uttered a roar that resounded through the forest. Then Arthur, advancing again on the disabled brute, with one mighty thrust pierced the heart of the great beast, so that its struggles ceased, and he rejoiced exceedingly to see the terrible animal fall dead upon the ground. ¶ When Arthur found himself saved from the lion, he gave thanks to Almighty God and his dear Mother that they had stood by him against the strong brute. ¶ But now it became very late, and as he saw no way out of the forest he was troubled, for since the morning of the previous

day he had eaten nothing, and he was also weary. There was nothing with which he could ease his hunger but the roots of the forest, and of these he knew not which to eat. He said to himself, "If I were a man acquainted with plants and herbs, I might supply my needs, as many a pious hermit living for a long time in the forest has done." So he wandered through the thickets seeking for berries and roots, and ate such as he found with keen pleasure in them; and though he gained little sustenance he thought that the best of food had never tasted sweeter to him than did these miserable things. When it grew dark, he climbed a small tree for fear of wild animals, but at midnight, when the moon was shining brightly, he heard something coming from a distance that seemed to be a monstrous creature, and the noise of it was terrible to hear and sounded most dismally in his ears. Hearing such a monster coming toward him he crossed himself and commended his soul to Almighty God and all the dear saints, praying them to come to his help against this thing that was advancing so swiftly toward him. Scarcely had he done this, when an unclean, venomous beast, vague and enormous beneath the moon, breathing forth a polluting and sickening vapor, came to the tree upon which he was, and struck it so mighty a blow with its tail that the tree, which was not large, was so shaken that Arthur fell to the ground. When the king found himself on the earth, he was so amazed and terrified that he knew not whether he was hurt by his fall or not; and at this instant if he could have had his wish it would

surely have been that he were safe back in his kingdom, where there were no such terrible things as this. Nevertheless, like a valiant knight as he was, after begging of God that if his last day were come he would receive his soul into his holy kingdom, he drew his sword and put himself on the defence, for he saw that there was no hope of fleeing from the attack of this unnatural foe. It passed on a little beyond the king, who had just begun to rejoice in the hope that his danger was over, when it turned suddenly around upon him, and wound its tail two or three times about his body; then it released him with a quick and powerful swing that threw the good Arthur against a tree so violently that he thought his ribs were broken. Though he sprang up at once, the creature was almost instantly upon him; but the king quickly sheltered himself behind a tree, so that when the monster tried to strike him with its tail it beat upon the tree, and in this way could do Arthur, for the moment, little hurt; but it had long sharp-pointed teeth that cut deeply, and with these it struck so swiftly that had it not been for the tree the unfortunate king must soon have lost his life. As it was, he received so many wounds through his broken armor that he had not much whole skin left upon him. But he still fought manfully, though the animal had such a hard, scaly surface that his sword edge glanced off and could not penetrate it, and the horrible odor that the monster emitted was harder for Arthur to bear than the sharpness of its fangs. When he saw that the enormous scale-protected creature

was still fresh and unwounded and would not leave him, the brave Arthur



again called on God and begged that he would take pity on him. Then he cried, "O, my dear friend and brother, in seeking to help thee I end my life, but had I only once seen thee before my death I would be more willing to die." As Arthur so spoke, the monster came at him again, and seized him so violently with teeth and claws that it brought him to the ground, and fell upon him more furiously than before, tearing his mail in pieces and wounding him so sorely that he thought indeed that his death had come. In this extremity of peril, God, the Almighty, who often suffers His people to sink beneath the waves but not to drown, and who will not forsake those who truly believe in Him, came to the aid of the pious king, that he should not perish so miserably by the fangs of this evil monster. After it had held him a while fiercely in its claws it sought to change its grasp, perhaps for the purpose of devouring him, so for an instant it released him a very little, in which instant he was able to move himself and use his sword, which, as he still lay beneath his en-

emy, he thrust upward into the navel of the enormous reptile, where its skin was not so hard as on the head, neck, and back, where he had hitherto struck; and his sword went up into the monster's body, and penetrated its heart. When the great dragon felt this fatal wound, it sprang into the air, uttering a terrible indescribable cry, but fell again immediately, writhing on its back in dying agonies. Arthur, now released, with difficulty regained his feet, and, fearing that his dread foe might again recover strength to attack him, hewed at the softer parts of its body, now turned upward, until its struggles ceased and the thing was dead. So this dreadful battle was over, and Arthur, looking about him with wearied and despairing eyes, perceived that the dawn was beginning to show a faint light among the trees; but he cared little for the day, for he thought that he could never leave that fatal place, and had no other comfort to expect than that of death. While he lay there in despair because of his dreadful wounds he heard something coming toward him through the wood, and wished that he might die at once, for he thought it was another fierce creature about to fall upon him when he could no longer defend himself. Expecting death, he cried out, "O thou Almighty Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, I beg of Thee that Thou wilt be my intercessor, and wilt take my soul to Thee; for I see that the hour is come when I must part from this world." Still he heard the rustling among forest leaves and brushwood coming nearer to him; and, looking up, he saw that it was a man clothed

in white garments, who thus spoke to him, ¶ "King of Algarbia, God's greeting to thee." ¶ As Arthur heard that he named him, he feebly signed himself with the cross, and said, ¶ "Art thou a spectre, or a spirit sent by God, that thou greetest me in his name? If thou wert an evil spirit thou wouldst not dare to use his holy name. If then thou art from God, I beg thee to have pity on me and help me, that I may be relieved from my exceeding pain and weariness, and that I may escape from this terrible forest, where I have seen things I had not believed possible, and where I have suffered much." ¶ "Thou didst not mistake in thinking that I am from God," was the reply, "for so it is; and in truth I have come to comfort thee." ¶ When he sat down by Arthur and drew from his scrip a golden box that was full of a perfumed salve, with which he anointed all his wounds, and gave him a certain root to eat. ¶ As soon as he had been thus anointed, and had so eaten, he became as fresh and well as if he had never suffered hurt or hunger. ¶ Then the White Knight said to him, ¶ "Arthur, thou shouldst praise God, through whom I have been sent to thee." ¶ Then Arthur did as he was bidden, and most devoutly praised God that he had been brought out of so great danger and perilous hurt. ¶ The White Knight then bade him mount behind him, on a horse that would bring them out of the forest, and during this ride said to him, ¶ "King of Algarbia, I know why thou hast left thy land: it is that thou seekest thy brother, Oliver of Castile; and I will tell thee of him. When he left Castile, he came to Eng-

land and there won by knightly deeds in a great tournament the daughter of the king, his only child, and as beautiful a woman as there is in this world. But misfortune has befallen thy friend, for a king of Ireland, whose father he slew in the lists, is his enemy, and has taken him prisoner, and put him in a most dismal dungeon, in which he suffers great misery and pain of heart and body. But be not troubled about him, for he shall not die, nor receive more permanent injury before thou hast released him from prison. If thou wilt have my counsel and heed my advice, I say to thee, go first to London and comfort thy dear friend Oliver's wife; for thou art so like him that they will not know thee from him. The king will think that thou art his dear son Oliver, and the Princess Helena that thou art her husband. But she is sick unto death from the loss of thy friend, and if thou dost not go quickly thou wilt not find her alive, so thou shouldst not delay. When thou comest to the city thou must lie at night by her, that she may believe that thou art her husband, Oliver; but let no evil thought come into thy mind toward her; for every evil thing we do, its punishment we surely rue. When thou see'st that her health is restored, leave her and come into this forest, where thou shalt have new tidings from me." ¶ With these words the White Knight brought Arthur out of the forest, and bade him dismount. When he did so he fell upon his knees to thank his deliverer, but the White Knight had vanished, so that Arthur knew not where he went.

Chapter xv. How Arthur

went to London, and was received by the king and court as Oliver; and how he cured the illness of the princess.



When Arthur found himself alone upon the road, his first act was again to return thanks to God, the Almighty, for all the favor that had been shewn to him; then he determined to perform exactly what the White Knight had enjoined; for he believed him to be a direct messenger from God: so he went forward until he came to the sea, where he found a ship about to set sail for England, and with her captain he speedily arranged for his voyage, having found his purse miraculously replenished. After he reached England and disembarked, the first city to which he came in his journey to London was Bristol. There he was recognized for Oliver, and the news at once ran through the city that their lost prince had returned; so there was a great hastening to the house where he lodged, that all might assure themselves that the good tidings were true. Immediately a swift messenger was sent to the king in London, who speedily brought there the great news

from Bristol. When the king learned that Oliver had returned he was so overcome by joy that he fell down and for a long time was unable to speak. His servants raised him up, and laid him on his bed while he was unconscious, from which state he fell into a sleep. When he awoke his first inquiry of his servants was whether it was true, or if he had dreamed that Oliver had returned safe and well. When they answered that it was true, he rejoiced greatly, and praised God, who had restored to him his son. Presently another messenger came with other news; and one of the king's servants went out to him, and asked what tidings he brought, and was answered, "Say to the king that if he wishes to see Prince Oliver, it is time to make ready, for he is now scarcely a mile distant from the city." The servant went back to the chamber of the king and told him the tidings that had come. At which good news the king, although he still felt ill and weak from the condition into which his sudden surprise had reduced him, at once ordered that preparation be made as hastily as possible, for he would ride forth to meet his dear Oliver. Horses were saddled with speed, and the king, with all the princes and nobles who were present at the palace, rode joyfully forth to receive their long-lost prince and hero. When Arthur beheld the great company of people riding toward him, his eyes filled with tears; for he felt very sad at the thought, that his dear comrade should still lie in a dungeon, while this great honor and joyful reception were awaiting his return. So he came

to the king, who looked upon him with exceeding joy and love, and had no other



thought than he was Oliver, the husband of his dear daughter, his highly valued and beloved son, whom he had not seen for three years; nor did the nobles, or the people who greeted him, find him in any way different from Oliver; or if they noticed any change, it was only such as might occur to any one in three years: no one doubted his identity, for, in truth, the resemblance was very perfect. ¶ They dismounted from their horses and the king ran toward Arthur with extended arms and embraced him, and could not at first speak, because of the joy that filled and overpowered him. When words came to him, he cried, ¶ "God's welcome to thee, my dearest son; for thy return brings great joy to me and to all this kingdom, which has mourned and suffered much grief on thy account." ¶ "Gracious lord and father," Arthur answered, "what has happened came not about through my wish: more than this, I cannot now say; but, if it is God's will, I will bring better service to this realm than I have ever before given; and will endeavor to make all those who have grieved

on my account forget their sorrows in joy. Since God and his dear Mother have helped me again to this land, I am more than ever disposed and resolved to serve the least, as well as the highest; for I have experienced many things, that make me more humble." ¶ When he had so spoken, the princes and nobles who were with the king greeted him, as did all who came to meet him, and they were so many that the place of meeting would not well contain all those who crowded thither; for people came from all parts of the kingdom that were near enough to learn the good news that they might again look upon their young lord whom they had so long mourned as lost. So great a number soon assembled that it was necessary to set up an elevated stand upon which Arthur must mount in order that all who might not come near on account of the great throng could look on their beloved prince. ¶ When he had stood there for some time, the king ordered that every one should return home, and that his retinue should remount their horses and accompany him and Arthur to the palace. ¶ In the city of London there was great rejoicing everywhere, the streets were hung with cloth of gay colors, the wives and daughters of the nobles and of the citizens put on their best attire and crowded the windows on both sides of the streets to see the return of the prince who had won the love of all, both high and low. ¶ How can we describe the waving of silken scarfs, the shouts, cheers, pageantry, and tumult of rejoicing as their loved Oliver, as they supposed him to be, passed with the king and bowed to them with thanks. It was

so happy and heartfelt a welcome as no one had ever before seen. In the fulness of their joy, young and old cried aloud, ¶ "O God, we praise Thee for Thy grace in restoring to us our beloved prince." ¶ As they approached the palace, the princess, who was very ill, heard the shouting and asked what went on without; but no one dared tell her the truth, for they feared that she might be overcome by excessive joy, and that, in her weakness, it might injure her. The ladies who attended her left it to the doctors, who came at length and told her of Oliver's arrival. When she heard their words she feebly raised her hands, and in a faint voice scarce audible praised God. ¶ "O Saviour of the world, I praise and thank Thee that I may yet see, before my death, the dear one who has been the cause of this illness; then, indeed, death may come when it will, and I can await it gladly in the presence of my dearest husband, once more returned to me." ¶ The good princess wished to see, at once, him whom she believed to be her husband. ¶ Arthur was in great anxiety how he should bear himself toward his brother's wife; but, when brought to her chamber, he went to the bed, greeted her very gently, inquired of her condition in a low voice, which was answered by the faintest whisper; then he said to her, ¶ "My dear wife, I am grieved to the heart by thy illness." ¶ Perhaps she noticed something of coldness in his greeting, and the absence of a kiss; but, looking again on the dear face, of the identity of which she had no shadow of a suspicion, she was so rejoiced that, though not able to speak aloud, she gained

strength enough to whisper that she felt that she might recover now that she saw him well and safe before her eyes. ¶ It was not safe to prolong this interview; so Arthur soon took leave, begging her to be a good wife to him, and try to recover as fast as possible. ¶ From her chamber he was taken to the palace, where the king had summoned a great assemblage of nobles and ladies to meet him, and where he had commanded a sumptuous feast to be prepared, at which all the pleasure and diversion that could be thought of was attempted, though they would have been more joyous had not the princess been so very ill. ¶ It was forbidden that any one should begin any work for eight days; but the time was to be given up to rejoicing over their young lord who had been lost, but was now happily restored; and all were free to eat and drink what they would at the palace. ¶ While the princess remained very ill Arthur was permitted to see her only in short interviews from time to time. This was not displeasing to him, for it may well be understood that he had no easy part to play as a loving husband to a loving wife, while all the time he was restrained by his duty to his friend from indulging in any warmth of expression or action; and such restraint was misunderstood, and silently regretted by her for whose benefit it was adopted. ¶ Soon, however, the improvement in the health of the princess was so advanced that the time came when she was so nearly well that her doctors gave their assent to her wish that her dear husband should again sleep by her side: this Arthur could not avoid doing.

¶ When he came to her he laid himself down, and moved not from one spot; but when Helena moved nearer to him, and would have put her arm about his neck, he said to her, ¶ "My heart's love, come no nearer to me, but lay thyself again in thy place; for I have sworn to God that I will not so much as touch thee with my hand until I have made a pilgrimage to the twelve holy priests of St. Jacob, who have helped me out of the depth of great disaster to come hither. Therefore, I pray thee, help me to keep my vow and be content to know that I am again with thee; and I will make this pilgrimage in a very short time if God grants me health and strength. If God and the dear saints permit, thy husband will shortly be restored to thee, and will change into joy all the suffering that thou hast endured on his account." ¶ Helena listened to these words of Arthur, and obeyed him, lying still in her place, and saying that it was right, if he had made a vow to God and St. Jacob, that he should keep it. ¶ After a little she asked him where he had been so long, and what he had been doing during the three years of his absence. Arthur prayed her not to question him at this time, for he might not speak of these matters until he had performed his pilgrimage. ¶ When Helena was silent, and questioned him no more.

Chapter xvi. How Arthur returned to the forest, and met the White Knight, and was taken by him to the deliberance of Oliver, who, misunderstanding his rescuer, quarrelled with him.



¶ Arthur was royally entertained at the English court; and all the honors were shewn him that their young lord, Oliver, would have received, and which, indeed, they believed that they were paying to him. ¶ When he was assured that the princess was so much better that she was no longer in any danger from her malady, he went to the king, and said to him, ¶ "Gracious master, I have vowed a pilgrimage to St. Jacob, which I should now perform without further delay, and I must go alone." ¶ When he begged that he might have permission to set out at once and promised that he would soon return, if God gave him health and strength. ¶ So he took leave of the king and of the nobles and ladies of the court and parted from them with mutual blessings. The king gave him a letter commanding all his people to give him aid, and honor him; and said to him, ¶ "Dear son Oliver, I beg thee in the name of God to guard thyself well and bring us not again into such anxiety and sorrow as thou hast done when thou wast lost to us for three long years, and to remember that thy wife, my dear daughter, could not again bear

the misfortune of losing thee." ¶ The nobles all advised him that he go not



alone, for the roads were uncertain and dangerous; but he would not consent to be accompanied and went early in the morning when he had taken leave of the princess and promised her he would go no further than to St. Jacob's. ¶ He travelled as swiftly as possible, crossing the sea very fortunately, and came without accident to the forest wherein he had met the White Knight: this he dreaded to enter, remembering his former experience, and fearing to meet the strange wild animals by which he had before been so terribly wounded; but he saw none of these during the journey. ¶ When he had gone a considerable distance into the forest, he waited to see if the knight would come to him, as he had promised; which so happened; for in a short time he saw him advancing and greeted him very heartily. His greeting was returned with kind words, and this mysterious personage bade him mount behind him on his horse and said, ¶ "Arthur, my good friend, dost thou desire to have thy comrade again with thee? and darrest thou venture thy body against him who holds thy friend in

prison?" ¶ "Truly," said Arthur, "I will set body and all things which God hath lent me on the venture, that I may release him." ¶ "If such be thy wish," said the knight, "I will show thee the way. Thou art well arrayed in mail, which thou wearest hidden beneath thy coat, and this shall be the better for thee. The king who holds thy comrade Oliver in his dungeon has now gone out from his castle attended by a few of his people, not more than four in number, and all on foot. His castle is not more than thirty miles from this place, therefore if thou darest to fight with all of them I can bring thee speedily where they are, and give thee the opportunity to set thy comrade free." ¶ Arthur thanked the White Knight, and begged that he do him this service. With Arthur mounted behind him, the knight spurred his steed, and, aided by God, they were presently most miraculously at the place where the Irish king was walking. After the knight had pointed him out to Arthur, he said, ¶ "Dear friend, dismount. There is thine enemy. If thou winnest thy comrade's freedom, say to him that a knight clothed in white bade thee greet him, and that it was he who brought thee here." ¶ Arthur did as the knight commanded, and would gratefully have taken leave of him, but in that moment his strange conductor had disappeared; so he drew near the king, who walked in a beautiful field that was green and charming with grass and flowers. ¶ "Defend thyself, thou shameless traitor," cried Arthur, "for thou shalt die by my hand to-day, and all thy servants, if they help thee." ¶ With these words he drew his sword, and so smote

one of the servants who had sprung upon him that he split his head to the teeth. He cut the right arm from the body of the next who assailed him, and soon slew the third. He was thus assured against the king's servants, but had received some wounds in the body, though none that endangered his life or seriously disabled him. When now the king saw his servants slain, he attempted to defend himself against Arthur, for he was a stout and brave man, but he had no weapon except a small hunting knife, with which he could not come near enough to strike Arthur's body, so finally he sought to escape, and fled from his enemy. But Arthur followed, overtook him, and struck him so hard a blow upon the head that he fell to the earth. "O thou traitorous king!" cried Arthur, "thou perfured villain! Canst thou deny that thou hast in thy prison a king to whom thou owest service and gratitude? I demand that thou shalt give him to me, or, if thou dost not, I swear to thee by Almighty God that I will cut off thy head, for I know that thou hast not kept with him the faith thou hast sworn; and for thy foul offence thou deservest to die the death of a traitor." The king fell upon his knees, begged for mercy, and said, "O noble knight, spare my life, and I will give thee him whom thou demandest." Arthur granted the king's life on condition that he promise as soon as he reached his castle to send Oliver forth to him or himself bring him, and that he would give to both of them his safe conduct out of his kingdom. This he swore by the most solemn oaths that he would do; and then hastened quickly

to his castle, in great grief at the misfortune that had befallen him. As soon as he arrived therein he commanded that Oliver be taken from the dungeon. This was done, and when the unfortunate prisoner was drawn up to the light of day and saw the king standing before him, he said, "King, I beg of thee that thou wilt command that I be killed rather than thrown again into that hideous dungeon." "You are free from the dungeon," replied the king. "A knight has redeemed you from your prison, and I have sworn to bring you to him at once." When the king commanded that other clothes should be brought for the released prisoner, as what little remained of those that he had worn for three years sadly needed to be changed, suitable clothing was brought, and when put on the king gave the safe conduct which he had promised, for he was advised that he should not again go into the presence of the knight who had so ill used him, and this advice he followed. When Oliver and the king were about to separate, and the former be sent forth to his friend, the king said to him, "I am fully aware that in setting you free I am doing that which may bring me into great danger of punishment and death on account of your capture and imprisonment, and I may have deserved it of you, still, if I may ask something, it is that I beg you to forgive what you have suffered at my hands." To which Oliver replied, speaking quietly and discreetly, "Although what you have done to me was without any good cause, nevertheless, I promise you, — and I will keep my promise, — that I will tell to no man,

and will never suggest by a word that it is you who have brought upon me this injury and disgrace ; but if it is made known through other people and you should thereby come into danger, I will not help you." ¶ The king expressed his thanks, and said that he asked no more than this of him. Then when he saw that Oliver was so ill and weak that he was not able to go on foot, he ordered two servants to place him on a horse and conduct him to the knight who had set him free. ¶ They had but a little way to ride until they came to Arthur, whom Oliver recognized before his former comrade knew him, and he dismounted and ran feebly to his dear friend with outstretched arms and embraced him. ¶ Whoever had seen the great love that the two friends showed for each other at their meeting must have wept with them if he had a heart in his breast. They held each other in their arms for a long time, and neither could speak for joy. Oliver saw how his brother was overcome, and thought of the great loyalty that he had shown, for he knew that he could not have learned where he was and come hither without great travail, danger, and privations, and his heart so swelled within him that he could not even speak a welcome, but could only fall upon his dear friend's neck. ¶ Arthur saw that his friend's face, which had once been beautiful and full of bright health, was now so pale, thin, and worn that it was hardly recognizable, and that he was greatly changed by the illness which his weary years of imprisonment had induced. He was the first to speak, and said, ¶ "My dearest brother, comrade, and friend, this is in-

deed to me a joyful day ! On this day I have a great desire of my heart satisfied, and I praise God that I have found thee alive. A white knight brought me to this place from a dismal forest to which I had come in my search for thee. It is thirty miles away. There he found me and through him I learned where thou wert imprisoned. By his help, also, I came hither, and his parting words to me were that he earnestly desired me to give his greeting to thee." ¶ "Arthur, my dear brother, my true friend," Oliver replied, "through thy faithful love thou hast done so much for me that I can never repay thee ; but I will beg God that he will give thee the reward that thou hast deserved, for he alone can give it." ¶ When he saw the great friendship that existed between Oliver and Arthur, as shown in their meeting, which was near and in easy sight of his castle, the Irish king was fain to declare that he would send to each of them a horse from his stable that they might travel with comfort ; but they said to him that they would be well satisfied if he gave them one horse, which would serve for both. The king did this very gladly, and gave them the best horse in his stable. ¶ Both mounted, Arthur in front on the saddle, for he had been wounded in the fight with the king's servants, and now felt his hurt quite severely. Oliver sat behind him, and so they started slowly on their long journey toward London. ¶ On their way and during their slow progress they had many talks together ; and each inquired of the other what had befallen him in the time that had passed since they were parted ; and Arthur told his companion

the sad news of the death of his father, and how they had built his royal tomb with his effigy thereon in a great church



in Castile. ¶ When they reached England Olíber had his beard cut, which had grown to a great length in three years; this, with his freedom, renewed good spirits, and exercise in the pure open air, which had given him back his health, restored him again to his good looks and somewhat of his former appearance. ¶ But no one could persuade the two friends that they should take another horse than that given them by the Irish king, a powerful animal, which they had brought over the sea with them from Ireland, and which, though it had brought them a great distance, was well able to carry them to the end of their journey. ¶ They agreed with each other that they would openly tell all the circumstances that had occurred to them, what adventures they had met, what misfortunes suffered, what battles fought, the story of the past three years; but Olíber desired Arthur to promise that he would not tell at the English court the rank and family of his comrade, nor where in Ireland he had been imprisoned. On these subjects he wished him to be silent. ¶ The Eng-

lish people, as the comrades passed on their way, wondered greatly to see them both riding on one horse, and that they so much resembled each other; and they said to one another that Prince Olíber had brought his brother from St. Jacob; but they could not tell which they should accost as their prince. So the two had come on their way to London until they were within a few miles of that city.

¶ In speaking of past matters and of Arthur's visit to London, which he explained had been made according to the advice of the White Knight, — whom he deemed a heavenly messenger, — and for the purpose of preventing the death of the Princess Helena, who had been ill unto death in her sorrow for Olíber's prolonged absence, Arthur declared that no one had expressed a doubt that he was Olíber. ¶ At this moment an unexpected and very unworthy thought came into Olíber's mind; and when his companion ceased speaking of their wonderful resemblance, he quickly asked him how he had borne himself toward the princess. ¶ Arthur was about to explain wholly his conduct toward the wife of his friend, and how he had been compelled to counterfeit Olíber in many domestic affairs, when Olíber interrupted his beginning by asking suddenly if he had lain by her. ¶ This question startled the good Arthur, and he hesitated a moment in his reply, seeking to give his answer the most judicious form. ¶ Then Olíber asked him the same question again in an excited voice; to which his friend, feeling the unkindness and injustice of the suspicion implied, answered too shortly that he had done so. ¶ Then Olíber's wrath burst

forth. He forgot all the good service that his friend had done for him—he forgot everything in a storm of thoughtless passion. So filled with the venom of the demon of jealousy that he knew not what he did, he struck his brother who sat before him on the horse with violence; he fell to the ground, and in falling broke his leg. **¶** So overpowering was Oliver's rage and jealousy, that he would not wait to let his comrade explain what had occurred; but, while that faithful friend was crying out with the pain of the fall, and from his distress of mind that he should have been so misunderstood, put spurs to the horse, and rode away, leaving the unfortunate Arthur lying in the road, and he spoke no more words to him, good or bad. **¶** When he had gone a little way, still boiling with rage, he stopped a moment to consider whether he should kill Arthur; for he was completely under the dominion of anger at the thought of the great sin which he believed his former comrade had committed. **¶** When came remembrance of the great acts of friendship that Arthur had done, and of the loving comradeship that they had both felt for each other at all times from their youth up; how Arthur had redeemed him out of the great misery in which he had lain so long, and in which he must have died but for his help. Out of these thoughts he considered that he had done well to spare his life; and in leaving him now he believed that he had thereby requited him for all his goodness; for he could not think otherwise than that Arthur had cancelled every good act that he had ever done by the greatest wrong which it had been possible for any one to do

him; and he wondered greatly how in a heart full of many virtues one vice producing so much falsehood and treason could exist.

Chapter xvii. How Oli-

ver learned the good faith of Arthur; his distress on account of his conduct to him; how he found him again, and brought him to London, where he was cured of his injury.



With many and warring thoughts in his mind, Oliver rode forward and found himself in the streets of the city of London about an hour after nightfall, and soon entered the courtyard of the palace. **¶** The news of his arrival was at once taken to the king and to the princess. They supposed of course that his pilgrimage had been made, and both greatly rejoiced at his return. **¶** The king received him with hearty warmth, and affectionately bade him welcome, but scarcely recognized him at first, so thin and wasted was his face, and asked in surprise what sickness had so changed him during the time of his absence. **¶** Oliver replied that there had been no single good day with him since he went away. **¶** "Ah, my dear son," said the king, "thou

art now come to thy home, and we will soon bring thee back to health." ¶ When the king asked him if he had fully accomplished his vow to the holy ones of St. Jacob, as he had given them to understand was his intention when he went away. ¶ Oliver, hearing this, perceived that Arthur had declared that he would visit St. Jacob's, therefore he said to the king, ¶ "Gracious lord and father, my sickness prevented me, but, God willing, when I am again well I may then, and with more company, make this pilgrimage, which I will do." ¶ When the Princess Helena came and welcomed her husband, and sat at table between him and her father. She heard with surprise and sorrow of Oliver's illness that had prevented the fulfilment of his vow, and had many kind questions to ask, which sometimes puzzled her husband to answer, because of the strangeness of the case. ¶ When the supper was ended there was much more conversation with the great number of nobles and ladies who came to welcome Oliver until it grew late; when Oliver took leave of the king and all the company, saying that he was very weary, and withdrew to his chamber with his wife, to whom he was now returned after an absence of three years; and it may well be understood that it was very pleasant for him to be with her again, though thoughts of how he had left Arthur came often to poison his joy. ¶ He had no anger against his beautiful princess-wife on account of what Arthur had told him, believing that she had no other thought at the time but that his former comrade bearing his exact likeness was himself, and her husband. ¶ When they

were alone he would have taken her into his arms and kissed her, but she was surprised, having heard him say that he had not made the pilgrimage to St. Jacob's: therefore she said to him, ¶ "My dear husband, hast thou not forgotten thy vow to Almighty God and the twelve holy ones of St. Jacob?" ¶ Oliver asked her why she thus referred to his vow at this time. ¶ "Why?" exclaimed Helena, "dost thou not remember that when thou didst lie by my side thou didst never so much as once kiss me, saying that thou hadst made a vow not to touch me until this pilgrimage was fully made? And I now understand that thou hast not been there to fulfil thy promise: therefore I beg thee, my heart's dearest, to keep the vow thou hast sworn to God and the holy saints who brought thee safe to thy home." ¶ At her words Oliver understood at once the loyal faith that his comrade had kept with him; and the tears came to his eyes as he withdrew himself from Helena, and no sleep came to his eyes that night, for he said to himself, ¶ "I am the most ungrateful being that God ever created." ¶ All the calamity and suffering that he had known in the dungeon seemed little beside the present distress of his mind; and he thought if his dear comrade had suffered serious injury in being thrown from the horse he could nevermore be happy, and he resolved if he had caused his faithful friend's death that he would drive his sword into his own breast; for he deserved not to live who had given such vile requital for faithful and unselfish service. ¶ With the earliest dawn of day Oliver arose, bade them

saddle his horse, then rode as quickly as he could to the place where he had left Arthur the evening before ; but he was no longer there. He sought anxiously in all the neighborhood of the place, and finally heard from a considerable distance the sound of some one moaning. Riding in the direction of this sound, he discovered his brother Arthur, who with great pain and labor had dragged himself out of the road and under the shelter of a castle wall, where, being refused admittance, he had lain all night ; and an armed soldier was about to finish his suffering with a sword-blow when Oliver came to him. Oliver, springing down from his horse, and drawing his friend away from his peril, was so overwhelmed with remorse that he could scarcely utter a word ; and, indeed, if God had not restrained him he would in his despair have thrust his sword into his own body. He had drawn the sword from its sheath to prevent the killing of his friend, and he now fell on his knees beside Arthur, crying, “ Ah, my brother, behold me, the most remorseful and afflicted of men ; for I have shewn myself so heartless that I am not worthy to be forgiven by God or by thee ! Here is my naked sword. Take it, and take my life with it, for I have deserved death at thy hands and I am the most ungrateful man that was ever born of woman. Thou wilt deal more kindly with me if thou slayest me than if thou shouldst forgive me ; for in all the remaining days of my life I must carry with me always the remembrance of what I have done.” When Arthur saw his brother thus humbled before him, he said, “ My dear brother and

best loved friend, I pray God that he will restore thee to better reason and forgive what thou has done. For my part, I forgive thee with my whole heart. I believe that it is possible that all else that God has created may be changed and perverted ; but a true love no one can take from us, not even death. Although we may be at variance with each other at times, affected by anger or made unreasonable by misunderstanding, a true friend does not long cherish a quarrel, nor even does any just man say to himself, I will help one and hate another ; for whoever lives long must learn that all men are of one family and one kind, and all should be held to be friends, though it is seldom given to any to be such friends as thou and I have vowed to be.” Oliver could not answer Arthur for weeping, but he set about doing what he could to make him more comfortable. Arthur begged his dear comrade to have him moved from that place, for he had suffered greatly throughout the night, and was still enduring great pain in his broken leg. When Oliver asked if he had still enough strength of heart to wait alone until he went to a village near at hand in order to bring a wagon in which he might be taken thence, he answered, “ Yes, but I pray thee hasten.” So Oliver mounted his horse and galloped to the village, where he found a wagon which he brought to Arthur. In it he placed his suffering friend, so that he was taken with great care to London. All the way he walked beside the wagon, talking constantly with his comrade and watching that he was always carefully moved. When

they came to the palace he had a chamber made ready immediately, into which Arthur was brought without being seen by many people. ¶ Then Oliver sent for the best doctors in London and begged them to use all diligence until the wounded man was restored to health and sound condition. These gave him such care and attention, and Oliver procured for him such good and careful nursing, that it was not long before the leg was so much healed that he could go about his chamber on crutches. ¶ Oliver spent so much of his time with his friend that he deemed it best to explain very fully to his wife what he was now doing; and he also related to her all that had happened between him and Arthur, the latter's personation of him, and how it was that another man than he had lain by her side. ¶ The good Helena was naturally much surprised at this explanation of so strange an occurrence—an explanation, however, which made clear to her several things which had previously seemed more than strange, and she swore to her husband in the name of God that his friend had been scrupulously faithful to him. ¶ The king inquired what it was of which they spoke so earnestly, and Oliver, feeling that an explanation was also due to him, replied, ¶ "It is of the best friend and comrade that man ever had, my dear friend Arthur, with whom all my youth was spent." ¶ Then he related to the king the whole story, omitting nothing of Arthur's goodness, constancy, and loyalty; also he told of the long labor and suffering that he had endured before he could release him from his imprisonment in the foul dungeon

in which he must have perished but for this faithful friend. Then he told with the deepest shame the reward which he had returned for all this service, and he most earnestly begged the king to grant to his friend equal honors with his own, or, indeed, more—for Arthur was the worthier by far. ¶ The king was amazed at the strange story thus related to him, and declared it the most singular history in the world, whose like had never been heard, and he assured his son Oliver that he would show his friend all the kindness and honor that he could desire, and even so he knew that he could not do enough to equal his deserts or sufficiently recompense him for all the faithful service that he had done, for no brother had ever before done and suffered so much for another; and therefore he could not be over-rewarded. In his own person he would show him all the friendship and favor that was possible. ¶ When he sent for his court master and chamberlain and ordered that Arthur should live in the same state as his son Oliver, nor in any respect be less honored. He related to him why these honors were conferred on Arthur, and how he had deserved them, and told the whole story, the beginning, the middle, and the end; excepting only that he did not tell how Arthur had most virtuously shared his daughter's bed, for it seemed to him that this was a matter of which it was more respectful to the princess to be silent.

Chapter xviii. How Ar-
thur punished the Irish king; how he
became ill unto death, and his miracu-
lous cure, with what happened to the
royal children.



In obedience to the king's com-
mands great honor was shewn to
Arthur at the English court, and many
knights and noblemen were joined to
his household and placed in his service.
As soon as he was able to walk again
and appear at court he met daily the
princes and nobles, sharing with them
their sports and pursuits; and he was
always welcomed by them, for he had,
not less than his comrade Oliver, the
gift of drawing all hearts toward him.
The king made him welcome, and often
sent for him that he might enjoy his
conversation, finding so much pleasure
in his company that he soon held him,
on account of his knightly spirit, gulle-
less heart, and truth and good will to-
ward all men, scarcely less dear and
valued than his son Oliver. The
wrong done to his brother by the Irish
king often dwelt in Arthur's thoughts,
and he one day asked Oliver if it was
not his purpose to punish this traitor;
but Oliver replied that he had forgiven

him. "Can this be thy true mind
and intent?" said Arthur; "art thou
then so weak that thou shrinkest from
dealing with thy foe? By the God who
made me, this crime shall not stand un-
avenged!" He turned away in anger,
went at once to the king and made
known to him for the first time the
whole story; in what realm and castle
Oliver had been imprisoned, and the
name of his captor, at the same time
begging the king to give him such force
of armed men as he deemed fitting, with
which he would gladly undertake to
punish the traitor, and wash out the dis-
grace of England in the blood of the of-
fender; for he saw well that Oliver had
no intention of undertaking the deed.
The king listened very earnestly to
Arthur's fiery words; and his wrath
was also stirred even more deeply than
that of his son's friend; for this Irish
king was one of those brought prisoners
to his court, who had then sworn fealty
to the English throne, and whom he
had graciously and generously pardoned.
After he had well considered the matter
with a frowning brow, he gave Arthur
this answer, "By good friend, al-
though my son Oliver may do accord-
ing to his will in this, — for it may so
stand that this vile traitor set him free
under some promise, which he may not
in honor break, — yet I am not held
in any way to pass over his offence;
and thou art the man who shalt speedily
do justice on the traitor with, as I be-
lieve, a good will and a clear conscience,
breaking no oath that has been pledged."
"I am under no promise to the Irish
king," replied Arthur, "but in now
making known the name of this villain,

I break a promise to Oliver which he exacted from me when he was released from prison — a promise which I made half-heartedly and always regretted and which I now deem it a greater sin to keep than to break." ¶ Thereupon the king caused an army to be gathered together, of which he gave Arthur the command and in God's name bade him set forth at once for Ireland. ¶ The English army was not able to move so swiftly that the news of its coming went not before it. The Irish king called to him as many of his subjects and helpers as he could muster hastily, and came out in battle array against the English when they drew near. The two armies met, and many brave men on both sides lay dead or wounded upon the earth when the fighting ceased, and the English rested on the field that they had won. ¶ The Irish king, beaten but dauntless, took refuge with a few of his followers in his strongest castle, where he was soon surrounded and besieged. This fortress was ill-supplied with provisions; and its defenders were soon in as much danger from famine within their walls as from foes without. ¶ Pressed at last by hunger, but refusing to yield and being a resolute and valiant man, the Irish king called his men about him and said to them, ¶ "We are without food and cannot longer hold out. Let us die under the open sky, slaying our enemies, rather than yield ourselves to a foe within these walls from whom we may not hope for mercy! Around us, outside are hills and woods in which there is safety if we can cut our way through these besieging enemies — it may be

that some of us may do so." ¶ They looked in each other's faces and saw that they were all of one mind. So they put on their harness, lowered the drawbridge, threw open the castle gate, and rushed upon the besiegers; but they were too few in number to do aught but slay as many as they might before they were themselves slain. ¶ After the



king's death his subjects yielded the realm to Arthur and promised to accept as their ruler whomever the English king should choose to place over them. ¶ When the war had thus ended Arthur returned with his army to London, where he was joyfully received by the king and nobles, and especially by his brother Oliver. ¶ As a reward for his service, the king bestowed on Arthur the Irish kingdom that he had won; and its people were commanded to receive him as their liege lord and king and swear allegiance to him; which, being done, gave an added state to Arthur at the English court. ¶ Arthur wondered much that his friend had not made known his name and rank, and urged him to conceal it no longer; as he would be held in still greater estimation if it were known, and the king would have more pride in

his daughter's husband as the king of Castile, although in truth he was well enough pleased with him as it was. ¶ But Oliver begged his brother not yet to reveal that he was of royal birth, though it might be that he would himself soon make known the truth; and he preferred that the revelation should come from himself. Arthur, who seldom opposed his brother in anything, obeyed his wish in this also. ¶ The two brothers were as true comrades still as in their youth; and their friendship was the theme of the court and of the people, by whom both were praised and loved. It was said that whatever the one wished, the other desired also; and in generous deeds and noble lives they were as like each other as in their persons. ¶ So the days passed in peace and joy, but the father of all evil, the wicked one, who is the creator and promoter of all ill, as well as the author of affliction and distress in this world, grudged to the two faithful friends their happiness; and in a short time caused it to be changed into anguish and tears; for Arthur became so ill that the doctors gave no hope of his recovery and deemed that death alone could bring him relief. But Arthur was not to die at this time, though he prayed often to God to send death to free him from his pain. ¶ His illness was so terrible and unusual that no one had seen its like. A cancerous malady ate away his face until it was frightfully disfigured, and the odor of death was about him, so that all shrank from him except only his brother, Oliver, who abode with him, and tended, and comforted him. ¶ All the most learned and notable doctors were sent for by Oliver,

who prayed them to use every means that might bring help to his brother, and princely rewards were promised to any physician who should heal him. But no help or remedy could be found, and at length Arthur became entirely blind. ¶ When Oliver looked upon his dear brother sightless, and so changed that he was more like a dead man than a living one, he was as deeply grieved as if the disease had been his own, and he was so filled with sorrow and distress that all men pitied him. Oliver often said to Arthur, ¶ "My dear brother, knowest thou of aught that will give thee pleasure or help? If so, do not hesitate to speak of it, for I would be willing to change my condition with that of the poorest and lowliest laborer on the earth, if, by so doing, I could purchase for thee thy former health and strength." ¶ "My dear brother and good friend," said Arthur, "thou doest for me more than I have ever deserved of thee, for which I am most grateful; but I beg thee, in truth, that thou wilt implore God, the Almighty, in thy prayers to take me from this misery into His kingdom; for, were it His will, I would most gladly die. I fully understand that no one can help me; but I thank God for the hope which I have that through the pain I now suffer I may be absolved from my sins and find peace and happiness in the life to come." ¶ As Oliver lay one night in his bed and slept, he had a dream in which he was shown, though darkly, that there was a way by which he might bring about the healing of his brother. At the same time Arthur dreamed also that his cure lay in the power of Oliver. The same dream occurred to both three times,

that Oliver might give health to his brother, and that it could come through no other human aid. Then Oliver said to his brother, "Would to God it lay with me to heal thee, and it should be quickly done, cost me what it might. If this be so, I pray God that thy sufferings be laid on me if I do it not, for I am deeply in thy debt." At night before he lay down to sleep, Oliver knelt by his bed and begged God, the Almighty, that he would make clear to him in a dream if it were possible for him to help his sick brother, and how it might be done; and that he would show him this in such unmistakable manner that he might fully understand. As soon as he fell asleep the dream came, in which a voice said to him, "Oliver, thy brother Arthur may be healed only when



thou givest him to drink the blood that comes from thy two innocent children. The boy and the little maid must thou kill, take the blood of both, mingle it, and give him to drink thereof; but take heed that he knows not what it is, for if he knew no power could make him drink it; thou must also anoint him with the blood." When Oliver heard these words he was terrified; and he questioned the voice, calling it again

and again, but it was gone and he heard it no more, but awoke from his dream in affrighted and trembling excitement; nor could he sleep or dream more that night. In the morning he went to his brother and asked him how he had rested in the night. Arthur heard his brother's voice; otherwise he had not known who sat by him. He held out his hand to Oliver, and said, "My dear brother, there is no rest for me, except through thy help; but thou holdest in thy gift my death or my life; for a voice said to me this night that thou only canst heal me; but I understand only this, and not how thou shouldst do it." "Would to God it were so!" Oliver replied. Thus speaking he turned away and went to the church, where he listened devoutly to the mass. Thence he returned to his own chamber and thought over what the voice had spoken in the night, trying to recover sufficient composure to give it careful consideration; but he could not control his excitement, which still mastered him. He then knelt and prayed to God to guide him, a weak, afflicted man. He prayed, "My dear brother, who for my sake has suffered so many pains and endured so much labor, danger, and distress that I can never repay him, is sick unto death; and a message has come to me — but I know not whether it is from God, or the voice of an evil spirit — that I am to slay my two children and when I have mingled their blood give him to drink thereof that he may be healed. Almighty God, I have only these two children, a boy and a little maid; and, in them, I have not more than a half part; for their mother has also her share. She,

the daughter of a mighty king, has honored and taken me in marriage, asking not from whence I came, nor of what race. I must give up my beloved wife, riches, and station, kill my children and give their blood to my brother to drink that he may be healed; or, if I do it not, then must he and I in this world and I hereafter eternally suffer pain. What shall I do? How can I do this dreadful thing? It is too horrible! — and then there is the dreadful doubt of this message if it be of Thee.” As he thus lamented and called on God for guidance many memories crowded upon his mind: he thought of the children who were so dear to him; then of the great love he bore his brother. So one recollection combated with the other, and a great struggle went on in his mind and heart. After being for a long time distracted by such conflicting thoughts, at length a stern resolve came to him and his mind became fixed that he would kill his children to save his brother who had often ventured everything in his cause without one selfish thought of himself. As his brother had given up all for him, so should he give up all in return — and then, there was the message sent to him and to Arthur in their sleep; a divine message he felt it to be, which he dared not disobey. He entered the chamber where the children lay, for they had not yet arisen; and bade the nurse and the women leave the room. When he had closed the door he brought a silver basin and stood with his naked sword in his hand beside the bed wherein the children lay asleep. Then he gently withdrew the covering and looked at them. The boy, who

was five years old, awoke, smiled on his face, and called him “father;” the



little girl, fair as her mother, lay with closed lids. Oliver stood looking at them and found himself wondering which child he loved the best; then in his love for them he felt the purpose that had brought him to their chamber melting away; and he shrank back in fresh fright, saying to himself, “What kind of a heart should he have who would for any cause put to death his own flesh and blood? O, unhappy Helena! when thou knowest that I am the murderer of my own children and of thine, how shall thy heart endure its misery? for thou lovest not alone thy children, but thy husband also, who must fly from this realm or stay in death; for the king, thy father, will give me to the doom that I fully merit at all men’s hands. Nature stirs more strongly in unreasoning beasts than in me, for they will fight to the death to defend their young — as truly I also would do when in my right mind — O, I would gladly die to save my children from the cruel fate I am now about to bring upon them with my own hands!” Even while saying these words, he

went again to the bed, drew away the covering, and raised his sword to strike; but once more fatherly love moved him, and he could not. ¶ When the thought rushed into his mind of the unselfish constancy and love that Arthur had shown for him, and he said, ¶ "Shall I alone fail him in his need? God help me in what may come hereafter!" ¶ When putting behind him fear and natural weakness, he raised his sword and smote off the two heads at one blow. With trembling hands he held the silver basin, so that the blood flowed into it, and when the veins no longer bled he laid the little bodies tenderly side by side and placed the heads by them, as in life, and drew the covering over the still faces, weeping so that the flowing tears obscured his sight. But he wiped these away, took the basin, covered it with his coat, and left the chamber, locking the door and taking the key with him that no one might enter and find the murdered children. ¶ When with the basin as well concealed as might be, he hurried to his brother's chamber and sent away the watchers. When alone with his brother he poured some of the yet warm blood into a beaker and gave it to Arthur to drink. ¶ The blind man knew not what was in the cup, but drank from it as his brother bade him. And this history relates that from the moment he so drank the disease was checked and health revived in his wasted body, and all the disfigurements of his malady disappeared, leaving his face smooth and cured, while only his blindness still remained to tell of what had been. But little by little, as Oliver continued to give him of the blood to drink,

and bathed his face and eyes with it, his sight was restored. ¶ When Arthur at length arose from his bed sound and well, he fell upon his knees and would have kissed his brother's feet; this Oliver would not allow, but cried out, ¶ "My dear brother, for thy health praise God, the Almighty, and my two children whom I have slain so that I might give thee their blood to drink—look at this basin, still stained with it!" ¶ Arthur heard and saw, chilled with amazement and horror, like one turned to stone; then he became angry, and cried, trembling in every limb, ¶ "O, Oliver, how can a heart so perverted and unfaithful to a father's love and duty dwell in any human breast as must in thine, when thou couldst slay thy children for my sake!—for me who am not of thy blood or kindred, but of an alien race. Also in truth I would that I were dead, and that this terrible murder remained undone!" ¶ "I was their father," Oliver replied, "and I have killed them; thou hast no guilt in this matter, for it was not done at thy request nor with thy knowledge. The guilt of their death, whatever and however great guilt it may be, is mine; but let me believe that it was right to do it, and that it was a good and not an evil thing. In this belief is my only hope to escape the deepest pit of sin and misery that the great enemy of mankind has ever dug for the feet of the memory. But my dear brother and comrade, there is another thing that follows: we two must be separated from each other. Therefore I commend to thy care my dear wife; do for her the best thou canst; comfort her in all ways possible,

and be helpful to her, if it should chance that any one would do her wrong ; for she will be in much need of comfort when she shall learn what I have done to her children. For all the good I have done, or thought to do, in the world will not help me at all when the king is aware of my deed and is able to punish me. Therefore I must flee out of this land and seek some remote spot where no man will recognize me, that there I may serve God and atone for my sins and for all the evil that I have done from my youth to this time. But think not that I fly from fear of punishment : I would court death willingly, but consideration for my unfortunate wife constrains me to leave England, for she would not survive my ignominious death." ¶ While Oliver thus spoke with his comrade, the woman who had the care of the children went to Helena and complained to her that she could not come into the chamber where the children were to see how it fared with them, and she said if any evil befell the children the blame should be laid on no other than Prince Oliver who had thus locked them up without help or attendance. ¶ Now it seemed to Oliver an inhuman act to those who loved his children to leave them lying in the bed in their mutilated condition, therefore he left his brother and went back to his children's chamber with no certain ideas in regard to their removal, but drawn thither by the horror with which his unnatural act still filled his mind. ¶ When he came to the chamber he drew the covering a little ; but it was so dark that he could not clearly see ; therefore he went to the window and

drew back the curtains ; then returned to the bed with weeping eyes that were so filled with tears that still he could not see. When he had wiped away his tears and turned his face to the spot where the children lay, what was his amazement to behold them alive and playing happily with each other. He could not believe it, but thought his brain was disordered by the violence of his emotions. Still he looked, and still his eyes told him that his children were alive. Then came a great flood of feeling over heart and mind ; and unable to bear the quick passing from woe to joy, he fell senseless on the floor. ¶ When he came to himself he embraced and kissed his dear children, thus divinely restored to him, hugging them both closely to his breast, as if he could not otherwise satisfy himself that they were really alive. While doing this, he cried out, " O unspeakable power of God, which no man may fathom, I give Thee praise and thanks for the goodness Thou hast shown to me, a poor sinner ; and that Thou hast covered me with Thy great compassion." ¶ Then he again took up the two children from the bed, wrapped them in the bloody bed-linen, took one on each arm that he might continue to feel that both were alive, and went out of the chamber. The first man who met him was his brother Arthur, to whom he cried in a tumult of joy, ¶ " Brother, rejoice ! — So, I beg you, at once to the king, and bid him come to me in the church ; say the same to my wife, and to all who are at the court with them — to everybody to whom you meet in the street — bid all come to the church." ¶ And Oliver

passed down the middle of the street carrying his two children in his arms until he came to the church. Here he bade them ring all the bells that every one who heard might come. Then he went up to a high place where he might be better heard and understood by all. When he saw that the king and his wife, Helena, had come he cried with a loud voice, "Most mighty king of England, you gave your daughter in marriage to a foreign and unknown man; for I made known to you neither who I am nor the name of my family; nor did you know whether my wisdom and virtues were such as should belong to the son of a king; and I am sorry from my heart that I did not then announce my descent, which is from a royal house; for I am born of a king and a queen, my dead father having been the king of Castile. Since his death that kingdom has fallen to me as an inheritance; but I have never returned to my home. It is now my wish, however, to go there, and be crowned a king, and my wife a queen. Therefore I beg you, most gracious lord and father, that you do me the honor to go with me, so that I may return with a good company of noble friends — I, who, when I came away, rode alone, without companions from my home, for certain reasons that compelled me thereto. In this departure, however, I took leave of the king of Algarbia, — my good comrade, Arthur, whom you see standing here, — leaving him a letter and a glass of clear water, which should tell him of my future condition. In the letter was written that when he saw the water change in

the glass he should set forth and seek me; for I should then stand in sore need of help. And my dear comrade never forgot me; but looked often in the glass, and at length he beheld it change and become black; and this happened when I was made prisoner in Ireland. When he was aware of the change he acted like a most faithful friend, as well as a pious king; for, although he had been chosen regent of my kingdom until my return, he forsook wealth and honor, city and castle, land and people, and all things in which he had pleasure, and for my sake set out alone upon a road he knew not, and in a quest concerning which he had neither guide nor information, and bowed to God, the Almighty, that he would never turn aside nor give up the search while God granted him life until he learned where I was and brought to me his help." When Oliver related what Arthur had suffered on his account in the Irish forest and elsewhere, how he had fought with the king of Ireland and his servants, had overcome them and released him from the prison in which he had lain so long and so miserably. He told how after overcoming the king and slaying his three servants, this faithful brother had released him from a horrible fate, from which he could not have otherwise escaped, and how for a reward he had quarrelled with Arthur, thrown him down from his horse, and broken his leg. Then he went on telling how, after all these things, this faithfullest of friends became very ill, his malady growing most dangerous until nothing was left but utter despair. This was the condition four hours ago,

and Oliver told in what a state of anxiety and sorrow he had been on account of the illness of his friend. Then he said, "A dream came to me several times in my sleep, and a voice said to me, 'If he is given to drink of the heart's blood that comes from thy two innocent children, he will be well.' Compelled to the dreadful act of slaying my dear children by my great love and fidelity to my friend, and by the force of the heavenly message, with this sword I cut off the heads of my children so that I might give him the blood to drink, and that he might be made well, which has happened by the grace of God. When I saw that he was recovered, I thought to fly from the country on account of the terrible child-slaying which I had committed; but before I went away I wished once more to look on my children; therefore I went into their death-chamber, where, through the grace of God, who hath worked this miracle, I found them both living and playing together in perfect health in the bed. Therefore, all ye fathers and mothers, think, each of you, what great suffering was mine when I killed my two dear little children with my own hands; and also think what a tumult of joy, what a world of happiness came to me when I saw them again living in happy health." Then he raised both the children in his arms, and held them up, that all might see how they were miraculously well; and he showed them the bloody bed-linen in which they were wrapped that was stained with their blood. When Oliver thus brought his story to an end, all who were present were filled with great

pity and sympathy, and there was such weeping over the death which the children had suffered that great waves of sobbing agitated the hearts of all who were in the church. The king wept from mingled joy and sorrow; from grief at their deaths; from happiness at the heavenly restoration of his grandchildren. The Princess Helena, dreadfully agitated, had also heard her husband tell how he had slain her children, and as the terrible story was related she fell to the earth in a swoon. When she was restored to consciousness she rushed to her children and embraced them with motherly love, and could not really believe they were alive until she held them in her arms, and her kisses were showered upon them, and she thought them so beautiful as they smiled upon her that her tears rained down her face, and her eyes were so blinded that she could only dimly see her dear children. It was a pitiful scene to all who looked upon it; some wept from the sympathy they felt for Oliver, Helena, and the children; others for joy that the children were brought back to life, whereby the power and goodness of God were made manifest; but many wept they knew not why. When the tumult of weeping and of joy was a little stilled, the king went to Oliver and embraced him, saying, "O noble king! O my dear son! I thank God, the Almighty, for the wondrous token of His grace and mercy that has been shown to us this day, and that I have been led to give my daughter to one so blessed by heaven. Thou hast related to us a wonderful story, the like of which was never

heard before, and truly those of a time to come, when they hear this tale, shall hold it as we do for a marvel of the ages; and the brotherly love and fidelity which is between you two friends shall be chronicled and remembered as long as the world stands; for such an example of constancy has never before been seen; nor do I believe that it will ever happen again." ¶ The news of this great miracle was spread abroad through the kingdom, and the king commanded that a stately cloister be built as a lasting memorial of the grace that God had shewn to Oliver and his children. ¶ Joyous festivities followed, and all men did reverence and honor to their prince, now known as the king of Castile; and it was held to be a cause for rejoicing that the king had bestowed his daughter upon a man of royal rank so noble and virtuous and so beloved of God; but they said among themselves that he had dealt hardly with them in that he had so long concealed his name and rank.

Chapter xix. How Oli-

ber and his queen, accompanied by the king of England and a great retinue of English nobles and ladies, journeyed to Castile, where he and his queen were crowned; after which the English king returned to his own land.

The English king summoned all his princes and nobles to a courtly celebration, which was held with such magnificence as had rarely been seen before. When the princes and nobles were assembled, Oliver, in courteous words, prayed them to do him the honor to journey with him to the land of Castile, where he would be crowned, for the

kingdom was his by inheritance, and its empty throne awaited him. ¶ The



king consented to go, and many of the nobles were joyfully eager to attend them. Oliver paid fitting thanks to the king and to the nobles for their good will and the honor they would do him by their attendance. He begged his brother Arthur to go before them and announce their coming, and have such preparation made that he and his royal escort would be received with all honor and hospitality; bidding him spare no cost that the reception of his English friends should be magnificent, and his king father have a kingly welcome. This Arthur very joyfully undertook to do, and set forth at once with many nobles, who went with him to do him honor. ¶ When it was made known in Castile that their lost prince and liege lord, King Oliver, was at length found, and was returning to his kingdom to claim his inheritance and his throne, and that with him came his queen, who was the daughter and heiress of the king of England, attended by a princely retinue, there was great gladness among all ranks of the people, and every one desired that there should be great festivities with all courtly di-

versions and festive decorations that could be thought of, that the most splendid and hospitable reception and entertainment should be given to their king and his guests. ¶ The princes met and held council together how best to welcome him, and were of one mind that as soon as he arrived in Castile every city through which he passed should offer him and all who were with him free hospitality, refusing all payment, and should in no wise spare cost or labor to prove their loyalty and joy at his return. ¶ As soon as proper time had been given for his brother Arthur to arrive in Castile and make the proposed preparations, Oliver begged the king to appoint an immediate day for the journey, which was done. It was a noble, gallant, and numerous company which set forth from London, for all were eager to do honor to Oliver, to whom all had felt good will and love when he was only a knight of unknown lineage, while now they had great pride in his royal rank. With Helena went many noble and beautiful ladies and young maidens in rich attire and gallantly attended; so that the company was a stately array and very fair to see. ¶ It were long to tell of their journey day by day, but they came at last without mishap to the border of the realm of Castile. When Arthur knew that they drew near — he had set swift messengers along the way to bring tidings — he rode forth to meet them with a splendid company of the highest nobles of the kingdom. ¶ When they were met the Castilian lords alighted from their horses and did homage to King Oliver, bidding him and his royal and princely

guests welcome to Castile, and praising God for the return of their ruler, so long missed and mourned. To Queen Helena they gave especial welcome, and declared that a princess so beautiful had never before been seen in Castile. They greeted the English king with all honor and respect, and certain of the noblest among them placed themselves at his service to do his will in all things. ¶ King Oliver, the English king, and the knights and ladies of their train, gave courteous thanks in return, and were glad at heart that the long journey drew near its end and closed so joyously. ¶ In each city of the kingdom through which they passed the streets were hung with banners and costly cloth, and all manner of joy-proclaiming decorations that could be devised were everywhere to be seen. At every window as they passed the wives and daughters of nobles and citizens, clad in their richest gowns, smiled glad welcome and dropped flowers before their way. ¶ So many were they who rode with King Oliver that all could not be fittingly lodged in a single palace, therefore they were received into the dwellings of the highest nobles with great show of respect, and were given most courteous attention. ¶ At the sounding of trumpets all were brought to the governor's palace to dine, and tables were laid that all might eat and drink of the best that the land afforded; and place was given to each guest by the chamberlain according to rank and dignity. ¶ When the guests and the princes, nobles and ladies of Castile, were met together, all clothed in fair stuffs and rich garnishing peculiar to each land, their garments being

as unlike and distinct as the widely parted lands of England and Castile, it was a gay and picturesque sight, a marvel and a pleasure to all eyes. ¶ In each city where the travellers had rested they had seen in the castles of the Castilian nobles more things than may be estimated that to them were new and strange, whereat they were fain to wonder and often to admire. And they found more of splendor and grandeur in the fashions of living than in their greater but simpler England. ¶ And the former queen of Castile, Arthur's mother and Oliver's stepmother, came to the city of Wandolitis to meet her sons and their guests. Urged thereto by a message sent in haste by Arthur praying her to come to him and making known the tidings of Oliver's return, she could not, whether she would or not, do other than set forth without delay to join her son in Castile in order to receive the new queen, her stepdaughter, and bid her welcome in God's name; also to show proper honor and respect to King Oliver. ¶ In this city the reception of King Oliver was magnificent beyond what it had been elsewhere, and when they alighted at the palace the queen mother of Algarbia, attended by the court dames and a bevy of fair maidens, came forth to receive the young queen and her father, the king of England, with great reverence and honor. Honors of joyful welcome and homage were paid to King Oliver, and courteous welcome given to all the princes and ladies who were with them. ¶ When all had been conducted to sumptuous lodgings and had rested and changed their travel-stained dress for fresher raiment, the

tables were laid for supper, and all were served with good cheer of choice food and rare wines, set out in royal fashion; for Arthur himself had directed how all should be done, and nothing was lacking in carrying out Oliver's wish that the reception should be as magnificent as it could be made. ¶ On the following morning Oliver and Helena were crowned king and queen of Castile. At midday the trumpets were blown to summon the guests and Castilian nobility to the king's hall of feasting. In the midst thereof was laid a table raised some steps above others and at this table sat the kings of England, Castile, and Algarbia, and with them the two queens, all wearing crowns. ¶ When all were seated joy and merrymaking showed in all faces, and filled all hearts. Of rich and delicious viands there was a profusion, which all enjoyed very heartily. When the happy guests had made an end of eating and drinking, there was the buzz and murmur of gay conversation in which the silvery ring of the ladies' voices mingled with the deeper tones of the knights, but all subdued to the decorum of court usage. All praised Queen Helena for her sweet and modest mien, her great beauty, and the good will which she showed to all. ¶ After the coronation of his children, the king of England remained a month at the Castilian court, at the end of which time he asked Oliver if he would return with him to England. ¶ To this question Oliver replied, that he deemed it more fitting that he should remain for the present in his kingdom, which had been so long without a ruler that there was much that required his presence

and careful attention. So the king of England and his nobles took leave of Queen Helena and the Castilian court and set out on their homeward journey. Oliver rode with him as far as the borders of his land, where the king, his father, took leave of him with tears, and said to him, "My dear son Oliver, I commend to thee my daughter, thy wife, that thou wilt always give her the love and kindness which she has ever had from me, to which she is accustomed, and the lack of which would sorely grieve her, and I beg of thee, also, that should I need thy aid and send for thee thou wilt not forsake me." "My dear father," replied Oliver, "My love for thy daughter is not less than thine own, and it will never fail her. Thou shouldst also know full well that if thou sendest for me thou mayest always count upon me, and that I will never forsake thee." When they blessed each other, and the king of England went back to his land and Oliver rode home to the city where he held his court. Soon after this, the king of Algarbia also wished to return to his kingdom with his mother and his nobles. So Arthur took leave of his brother and his wife, as did the queen, his mother, who did not remind Oliver by any word of past events, nor did he in any way refer to them. When Arthur and his mother had returned to Algarbia, and Oliver had time to consider the ruling of his kingdom, he rode through all the parts thereof, and looked to the conduct of all the officials, and he was praised by all men, who said that the country was never so well governed as now. He took into his court service many young Castilian knights and

nobles, and certain Englishmen also, who had chosen to remain with him. When some time had so passed, and he had become well known to the nobles and people of his country, they were devoted to him, and bled with each other to do him service. All the country of Castile was also delighted with the two beautiful children whom he had brought with him from England, who grew in virtue and intelligence and became the pride of the people. When they heard of the miracle that had been done through them they wondered how Oliver could have had the heart to take their lives, but they were taught by this great miracle that no man can fathom the wonderful power of God, which was a good lesson to have before them daily. So King Oliver of Castile was very happy with his dear wife Helena, and with his beautiful children, and at times forgot the suffering of the past. He was held in highest esteem by all, and every one was obedient and submissive to his commands.

Chapter xx. Of the coming of the White Knight, and how he claimed his share of the treasure won by Oliver through his help.

When he had lived thus for a long time in peace and happiness, upon a certain morning when Oliver lay in his bed and slept, some one knocked upon the outside of his chamber door with such violent blows that it seemed in danger of being beaten in. The king was awakened, and demanded who was without making such a tumult. He who knocked made answer, "Open the door or I will break it in pieces; for I desire to come into

the chamber, having something to say to thee." ¶ When the king heard these



rough words he arose from his bed, took a naked sword in his hand, went to the door and opened it. As soon as it was unbarred and opened he saw there the knight who had come to his aid in England when he had lost purse and horse, and with them all his hopes of appearing in the tournament where he had won his wife—the knight who had served him well in that time of need; and he perceived that he still wore the white dress in which he had last seen him. ¶ When Oliver recognized who it was that thus demanded admittance he embraced him and bade him welcome in God's name. ¶ "God grant that I am welcome, and not otherwise," answered the knight, "for I have come hither this time not to bring thee gain and good things with which to rejoice thyself as I did before time." ¶ "You come not to me as one who is unwelcome or displeasing," replied the king, "for I have in deep remembrance what benefits I have had at your hand; and I also as well remember what I have promised you, and that promise I will keep." ¶ Helena was terrified when she saw this mysterious knight, clothed in

white and speaking so rudely, come into the room. ¶ The king bade her arise, and when she was dressed to come again to the room, and when this was done she heard the knight ask the king if he would keep the promise made to him, for he had come to hold him to it. ¶ "Gracious lord," Oliver replied, "I remember well the benefits that have come to me through your favor and help; and as I have already assured you I will honorably and honestly abide by all that I have promised." ¶ The king had never forgotten his promise to the White Knight, but had long ago prepared and arranged for this event, for he had been in constant expectation that at any day or hour the White Knight might come and demand his share of what had been won through his help. So he had divided all his property and goods as well and fairly as he could; and he now said to the knight, ¶ "Gracious lord, I will say in regard to my wife's jewels and clothing,—which one who wished to avoid payment to you might claim to be outside of our bargain,—that they have been fairly valued, and I will give you the one half part of their value in gold, for the clothes would hardly serve you so well as the money; but if that does not content you, take of the clothes as many as you wish, for they are all in these chests. I have also divided my treasure; take of this part what pleases you. As for the food which we have for our present needs, I believe that you will not begrudge that, but of the silver vessels take your share as you wish. I swear to you, by the God who created me, that I have divided all that I have won and

more ; for this treasure which is here is for the most part a Castilian inheritance from my dear father. Should I in the future receive aught from the kingdom of England you shall have your half portion of it as I have promised." ¶ The White Knight, after hearing this statement, shook his head and declared that he was not satisfied with what had been offered to him ; and he spoke to Oliver with increasing wrath in his voice, ¶ " King, thou liest in what thou sayest ; for thou sharest not fully with me, as thou shouldst, and as thou hast promised me : hast thou not won wife and children ?" ¶ The king could but answer that this was so. ¶ " Then shall I not have my part of them ?" ¶ This was a thunderbolt ; and when Oliver heard it, he fell on his knees before the cruel creditor, clasped his hands together, and begged that he would leave him wife and children ; he would give for them the other half of his treasure and the half of his kingdom of Castile : if this were not sufficient, he would give the whole of it. ¶ The horrified queen joined her husband in his supplication ; with agonized heart and tearful eyes, she implored this stony-hearted one to leave her the children that she had brought forth with much suffering into the world and whose loss she could not surmise ; and she entreated that he would be satisfied with that which her husband had offered in exchange, so that they might keep their dear children. ¶ The knight answered roughly, ¶ " Madame, I will not do this thing through thy entreaty, nor that of any other ; and if ye refuse me that which

is mine ye shall learn that it is in my power to make ye rue it." ¶ When Oliver heard these harsh and merciless words of the knight, he bade the queen go and bring the two children, which she did. She went to the chamber where they slept, awaked them, took them up and dressed them hastily, weeping and broken-hearted ; and brought them to the room where the knight still sat, looking hard-hearted and cruel. ¶ Oliver looked tenderly upon his pretty children and again implored the knight to leave them and take the kingdom and all his wealth ; but that obdurate one would not listen to him, but said, ¶ " No, I must have my share of the children." ¶ " Then, in God's name," said Oliver, " since it may not be otherwise, take the one that you will." ¶ The knight said that he would take the boy, for he believed that he was dearest to them. ¶ The good king Oliver took his son by the hand and with weeping eyes, gave him to the White Knight, saying, ¶ " My dearest son, go with him : I commend thee to the protection of God, the Almighty, and thy beautiful and amiable youth must be but a memory to me, since I must now be parted from thee." ¶ Whoever had seen Helena take leave of her child must have wept, if he had a heart ; for she mourned over him as if he lay dead before her, and cried, ¶ " O child of a royal house, why have I brought thee into the world since I am in part the cause of thy loss which rends my heart ? O woe to ye, mighty kingdoms of England and Castile ! for ye now lose your young king and ruler and ye may well grieve." ¶ When the White

knicht had taken the young prince into his charge, he was still dissatisfied, and told Oliver that he must also have the half part of his wife, the queen. Oliver could not understand from this otherwise than that she must be killed, and he said to the knight in despair that he must slay her if that was his will. The knight replied that he was not a murderer of women and that it was no part of their bargain that he should pay himself; but that Oliver knew what he had promised and must pay his debt; and he said further, "If thou givest me not that which is my due, so must thou and thy wife be aware that thou art foresworn and dealest wrongfully, and ye shall both rue the day." When Oliver heard and saw that his creditor had no mercy, he went to his wife, fell on his knees before her and begged her, in God's name, that she would forgive him her death; for she could see that nothing else would avail. He had sworn this promise sacredly and could not now go back from it. Far sooner would he live in the most pinching want, far sooner die himself, than so cruelly destroy her. The queen answered him through her tears, "My noble king and my dearest one! How unlike is this hour to that on which we were wedded! Then I knew not that thou wert a king; but to be a king or a queen is not to be happy — how happy might we be without other kingdom than our own and our dear children's loves!" Then she embraced him, and said further, "Therefore, my heart's dear lord, I may well say that the hours are unlike, for to-day is to thee and to me bitter and cruel; still I am

willing to suffer death that thou mayest thereby retain thy honor." Then she fell on her knees and prayed to God that he would forgive all her sins and would receive her soul into his kingdom, and if it should unhappily be that her lord and husband sinned in taking her life, that he would in his mercy pardon him. Then she arose, came to Oliver, again embraced him, kissing him on the mouth, and took leave of him, for she expected momentarily to suffer death. With a last thought of her children, she said, "Dearest husband, I commend to thy care my children, and though the boy goes from thee, thou wilt always learn of his welfare." She took the children in her arms, kissed them many times, with tear-blind eyes took leave of them, kneeled down and clasped her hands, looking for naught else than her death-blow from her husband, to whom she cried, "Oliver, dear husband, tremble not. Strike now without fear, for I forgive thee my death before God." And Oliver, with wild looks, as one whose reason was completely overturned by some horrid disaster, advanced toward her with his naked sword uplifted in his hand. But the White Knight saw their misery and heard their piteous words. He did not allow Oliver to strike the fatal blow, but snatched the sword from him, and said, "Hold, king! I have still something to say to thee and to thy queen and an explanation to give: Oliver, rememberest thou a knight who was called John Talbot, at whose death thou wast present and who died under ban for a debt that was unpaid?" Then he

asked him further if he remembered that he had paid this debt to the creditor who had put the knight under ban, by which means the knight, John Talbot, was laid in consecrated ground, as was his right as a Christian man. ¶ And Oliver in amazement answered that he remembered it well. ¶ "I tell thee truly," said the knight, "I am that John Talbot whom thou didst serve, and for that reason I aided thee to appear sittingly at the tournament that was held in England. Now for the great service thou didst me, a man previously unknown to thee, I give thee again all thy goods and silver and gold and I release to thee also thy son and the claim that I hold against thy wife. I have put thee to the proof that I might be certain whether thou wert faithful to thy spoken word, and I see that thou art in truth an upright man. ¶ I desire also to tell thee why on the first day of the tournament thou wast clothed in black: it was a symbol of the darkness wherein I was. On the second day the red in which thou wast clothed was a symbol of the fierce fire which I suffered in purgatory. The white clothing on the third day was the symbol of my deliverance, and as white color is pure and without stain, so also am I cleansed of the stains of earth in this hour, and through thee and thy good will toward a stranger I am delivered from pain and go hence into the eternal kingdom to behold the face of my Creator and Saviour. Now I take leave of thee; whither I go thou mayest not now come, but truly I will implore of God, the Almighty, that he will forgive thee all the sins thou hast com-

mitted." ¶ When he had so spoken these words the White Knight disappeared from the king and queen and ascended in that moment to heaven, and a bright gleam of celestial light shone into the window where the king and queen stood to have the last glimpse of their angelic visitor whom they had so much feared, but now revered as a heavenly messenger. ¶ When the gleam had faded out, they fell upon their knees and thanked Almighty God and his dear Mother for the great grace that had been shewn them in that hour. When their prayer was ended, they gazed in each other's faces and felt in their hearts as if the queen had been dead and was made alive again. ¶ Until this time the king of Castile had suffered from a shadow of a doubt and fear which clouded somewhat all his pleasures; but after he was relieved from his debt to the White Knight there was no cloud to darken the happiness of his life or that of his queen. ¶ For a time the queen was somewhat ill from the shock of the trying scene and the fear of death which she had suffered. When Arthur heard of this, he rode out of Algarbia and came to Castile to visit his brother Oliver, and abode some time with him, during which time there was much merrymaking. Soon the queen's ailment passed from her and there was joy in the land and a gay life than ever before at the court. ¶ When Prince Henry was grown to manhood he became a most accomplished knight and was filled with all noble qualities and a restless desire that urged him to win fame in the world as his father had done in his early

manhood. ¶ At the news which came to Castile, that the king of Cyprus was hard beset by infidels and implored the help of Christian princes against his foes, Prince Henry besought his father that he might be permitted to lead a band of knights to the deliverance of the Cyprian king. ¶ This request was granted, and to the gallant young prince came many brave knights to enlist under his banner, which received the blessing of the Holy Father of the Church and was then borne by Prince Henry and his knights against the infidels who dared to advance into the country of a Christian king seeking to bring it into heathendom. ¶ But this brave and pious prince never returned to Castile. After freeing the king of Cyprus from his foes, he led his knights on the steps of the retreating enemy, following them into their own country, where he won many battles, and wrested much land from the rule of the infidels and converted it to Christianity. ¶ So valiant a warrior was he, that, but for his early death, his name would have become most famous in history. But he died,

as a brave warrior and pious Christian should die, in the midst of heathen foes,



upholding the banner of the Church and the glory of God, the Lord of Hosts. ¶ In Castile the years passed in peaceful content, and the tale tells that in the fulness of time a marriage was contracted between the king of Algarbia and the daughter of his beloved comrade, King Oliver. ¶ This could not make closer the ties that bound the friends together, but it brought them into one family, which was enriched and adorned with the crown of the highest virtues. ¶ Of these virtues the friendship of the two kings was so memorable that the fame of it spread over the world.

¶ Here ends the laudable history of
the two highly famed princes, Oliver of Castile and
Arthur of Algarbia, his true comrade; and of
Helena, daughter of the king of England;
and of Henry, who was a son of Oliver
and Helena, his faithful wife and
queen; and of the great deeds
that were done in their
lives. God be gracious
to them and to us
all. Amen.



❧ Epilogue by the Swiss Translator ❧

Here follow certain reasons why this book may be regarded as relating to events that have actually happened. ¶ I have often read histories and chronicles that seem to my mind not entirely veracious for the reason that the chapters did not correspond with each other as they should have done, and also that miraculous things were related therein as I also find in this book. ¶ But there is one thing in this book which seems to me pleasing and which leads me to believe it to be a genuine history; and this is that the events here described stand in orderly connection with one another. ¶ In regard to the statement in the beginning of the book, that the resemblance between Oliver and Arthur was so great that one was often mistaken for the other, this should cause surprise to no one; for when two children are brought up together, are of the same age, are similar in complexion and features, their minds and manners of speech trained under one master, and always dressed alike, it is in no way surprising that they should be mistaken the one for the other, although those who are with them daily perhaps know them apart. ¶ The excessive love of Oliver by the Queen of Castile might occur from temperament or a malady to which women are subject, although her passion exceeded all reason. ¶ As to the glass of water which, as the story tells, changed its color when Oliver was thrown into prison, you are not required to believe that it was water endowed with such power through unrighteous means; but you may understand that it happened through the will of Almighty God, to whom Oliver prayed day and night that his brother be made aware thereof when he should fall into misfortune or affliction. This God granted, and made it known by means of the glass of water; for Oliver was full of all virtues, and lived ever according to God's will. ¶ Through such miracles, God, the Almighty, manifests himself to those men who take pleasure in serving him. ¶ The many strange adventures that befell Oliver and Arthur by sea and land may all be natural events, such as often happen on the earth, and by the grace of Almighty God are lived through. As to the White Knight who came to the aid of Oliver and Arthur, comforting them often, that was also a grace sent from God whereby he showed his mercy, and rewarded Oliver for his good deeds in releasing the White Knight from ban at loss of goods to himself; and from it may be recognized that God leaves no good or bad deed unrewarded. ¶ When Oliver was imprisoned by

the Irish king and released by Arthur, God did not leave unpunished that king whose cruel deed was without reason or justice; but caused that, in the end, the ill doer should forfeit his life therefor. ¶ And this should be an example to all who war against justice, and do not hold to that which they have promised to the ruler set over them; for this king had sworn allegiance to the king of England, and was false to his oath when he seized Oliver. ¶ When Arthur might not otherwise recover he drank the blood of the children, whereby was shewn Oliver's great love and loyalty, in that he slew his children rather than let his brother die. ¶ This miracle may be explained, that God so changed the appearance of the children that Oliver believed that they were dead; as the Jews were deceived when they thought that Moses had horns on his head when he had none; and so it may have happened to Oliver. Or it may be possible that the children really were dead and God in His mercy restored them to life. ¶ So great were Oliver's truth and piety that he would not break his oath to the White Knight, but would have slain his wife to keep the promise he had made, that half of what was won in the tournament should be given up to his helper; and he was willing to do this although there was no witness to testify against him. ¶ So we read of King Herod to whom John the Baptist was dear, that before he would break the vow made to his daughter he caused that good man's head to be cut off. And in like manner, Oliver would sooner kill his wife and children than break the promise that he had made and solemnly sworn. ¶ Through such instances every Christian man may know that to God all things are possible; and when it is His will to teach and instruct us, He gives us many beautiful examples through the miracles that He daily performs for us poor sinners, which should be eternal reminders such as this history expresses. ¶ Let it be held in remembrance that all should apply themselves diligently to good and honorable works for the great benefit that may spring from them. ¶ So shall the young find written here how those of an earlier time lived in the fear of God, whereby they won honor, lands, and goods, and at last a reward of eternal life; for they did not strive on account of desire of gain, nor of worldly honor, but on account of Christian faith; to increase which we should exercise our hearts and wills day and night. ¶ Thus may we come to be well remembered in the history of our day, and without doubt in the eternal life: whereto help us, help us all, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost — Amen.

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